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DIG THE HERDERS/DISPLAY THE HOTTENTOTS

the production and presentation of knowledge about the past

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**To all those people, projects and communities committed to the development of an
empowering voice in the writing of South Africa's histories;
and to my grandfather, Marcus, who always encouraged the pursuit of knowledge.**

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It is accepted that the process of research usually involves many shifts in concept, framework and direction, from the inception of a research project to its completion. It is also generally accepted that in a project of this nature it is the actual dissertation, the final product, the completed "work", that counts. I believe that the research process, the shifts and changes, the directional influences, are as important as what is finally regarded as worth writing up. There are many people and many events that have been influential in the development and production of this dissertation. The more important political and social events that influenced my work are difficult to define, but I would like to thank the people who have assisted or contributed to the process of producing this dissertation:

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge and History have for many years been sites of struggle in South Africa and academic versions of the past are being challenged with commitment by oppressed communities all over the world. Archaeologists, as producers of information about the past, are necessarily involved in such struggles.

The aim of this research project has been to demonstrate that our constructions of the past are deeply embedded in the politics of production and presentation of knowledge. The manner in which information is presented to the public is integrally linked to the manner in which knowledge about the past is produced. These politics form a particular dynamic with the way people perceive themselves and others.

By examining the specifics of the construction of a *Hottentot* icon, and its links with constructions of gatherer-hunter histories, I have also tackled issues such as the contingency of research interpretations, the subjectivity of researchers, the myth of "scientific objectivity", and knowledge as a site of struggle in South Africa. I have also examined the links between writing, description, sexism, racism and colonialism, and educational methods and the authority of the expert.

It is in the use of authoritative techniques in the production of knowledge and in the presentation of research interpretations that the problem lies. Authoritative techniques are pervasive and powerful, and function to inhibit public challenges to academic knowledge. The weight of notions such as science, objectivity and truth - which back up most presentations of academic knowledge - disallow the empowerment of communities towards participation in the processes of producing knowledge. I advocate a shift towards production and presentation that uses instead methods that encourage traditionally powerless communities to play an active role in the construction of their histories.

I have focussed on the construction of authoritative herder histories, in both museums and other public media, in order to examine the role of archaeologists in struggles around the past. Whether we are conscious participants in these struggles, or whether we adopt a stance of objective neutrality, the information we produce has a powerful and important effect on the way in which people make sense of ourselves.

A People's Archaeology - an archaeology dependent on community participation in research, interpretation and presentation - will require the development of democratic research methods. And this necessitates the initial steps of demystifying the process whereby academic knowledge is produced, and the development of an understanding of the origins of historical symbols. This project is a contribution to these debates, and will hopefully be, in some way, a contribution to the process of formulating different research methods towards the development of a People's Archaeology.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract	ii
Contents	iii
Chapter One Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two Community Education Resources.....	13
Chapter Three The Past as a Site of Struggle.....	26
Chapter Four Archaeologists as Producers of the Past.....	43
Chapter Five Museums of Modern Mythologies.....	58
Chapter Six Textualised Hottentots.....	78
Chapter Seven Hottentots and Other Objects	96
Chapter Eight Conclusion	109
References	120
Appendix A.....	132
Appendix B.....	142
Appendix C	144
Appendix D	159
Appendix E.....	166
Appendix F.....	169

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1985 was in many respects a turning point - for myself, for the discipline of archaeology in South Africa and for politics in this country. It was a year of militant struggle in South Africa. It was the year in which the Southern African Association of Archaeologists (SAAA) held its September conference in Grahamstown and it was at this conference that it was announced that South Africans were to be banned from the Southampton World Archaeology Congress (WAC). It was the year in which I completed my Honours degree, began work in the new Community Education Resources Project (CER) at the University of Cape Town and began to question the links between archaeology and the social context in which it is practised in South Africa.

The 1985 Southern African Association of Archaeologists conference was held in an atmosphere of political stress and tension. South African Defence Force troop-carriers were seen daily moving towards the black townships of Grahamstown while we discussed, in the relative calm of Rhodes University, the issues of shipwrecks, the academic nomenclature of gatherer-hunters and herders in Southern Africa, and the need to educate the public about rock-paintings in order to prevent further destruction. During this conference came the announcement that South Africans had been banned from participating in the WAC.¹ World revulsion against apartheid had made it relatively easy to extend the strategy of isolation to the field of academia - traditionally seen as "apolitical".

Until September 1985 archaeology as a discipline in South Africa had been relatively unpoliticised. The WAC banning undoubtedly brought a sense of crisis inescapably into the South African archaeological arena, making it clear that archaeologists in this country were not to escape the stresses and tensions that were becoming starkly evident in every sphere of South African life. The WAC banning can be seen to mark a point of initiation for South African archaeologists in that we were forced to confront the issue of the various roles that archaeologists have played in our country. While there had been proposals at the 1983 conference in Gaborone, Botswana, to include a clause in the SAAA's constitution rejecting apartheid, this was not carried. After proposal again

¹ See Ucko (1987), MacKie (1987), and Tobias (1988).

at the Grahamstown 1985 conference, the clause was finally included through postal vote.²

At this conference several archaeologists met to discuss the role of archaeology in education in South Africa. Although this had certainly been an issue of concern in previous years,³ this appeared to be the first time a group of concerned archaeologists had come together to formulate an approach to educational issues from their position as archaeologists. The Archaeological Awareness Workshop (AAW) was set up out of a recognition of the need to respond to the educational issues of the day, particularly the calls for People's History. The AAW as a group has not met with much success, although individuals have been continuing the type of work that the AAW outlined as the concerns of its members. The concerns expressed particularly, but not only, by members of the AAW have been in line with the educational concerns expressed internationally by archaeologists, issues that have been taken up by many in Europe, America, Australia and Africa.

Internationally, a focus on the practise of archaeology has been evident for many years, addressing issues such as - what is the past, why is archaeological research done, what purposes does such research serve, in whose interests is such research conducted, and to what extent research conclusions mirror the current social ideology, where archaeology has been used to legitimate the present and reproduce the present in the past.⁴

By the end of 1985 I had begun to question the links between my Archaeology Honours project - an initial exploration of the *Paradise* site in Cape Town,⁵ and the broad socio-political context in which I was studying and practising archaeology. The links seemed desperately tenuous, almost non-existent. But at the end of 1985 I began working for the Community Education Resources Project that had been set up by members of the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town, a project that would in some way attempt to close the evidently massive gap between intellectual endeavors at the university and the need for information and resources in communities around Cape Town - communities traditionally deprived of access to such resources. Progressive academics and students on campuses were actively seeking ways to contribute more concretely to attaining liberation in South Africa. I worked in the project for a year, constantly questioning the ways in which I could combine my interests in archaeology with my interest in educational issues, with my particular belief that information and

2 I have been refused access to the minutes of the discussions around the issue of including an anti-apartheid clause in the SAAA constitution by the executive of the Association, and am thus prevented from elaborating further.

3 See for example South African Archaeological Bulletin 33(127) June 1978: Editorial.

4 See for example Bender (1986), Gero et al (1983), Hall (1984), Hodder (1983) and Trigger (1984).

5 The site of Paradise, a site variously used as a Dutch East India Company post and British government employee's lodge, fits into an overall research design around early colonial settlement and the spatial layout of social relations. For discussions on the archaeology of Paradise, see Honeyman and Ritchie (1985) and Hall and Malan (1988).

resources at universities should be made available and accessible to groups in South Africa that had traditionally been denied this access.

In mid-1986 I had the opportunity to combine my archaeological and educational interests when the project I was working for (CER) offered five two-year studentships to Masters students interested in "making their research accessible to the community". Two students from Sociology, two students from Economic History and I, from Archaeology, were the recipients of these bursaries, constituting the Masters Group in CER. The idea of Masters students, attempting to work in a collective manner to produce accessible resources, through new and different research processes, was definitely new in South Africa. We had no precedents from which to work, and had to start at the beginning, questioning why CER had been set up, and why it was important that Masters students, or any academics, should be involved in producing popular resources. We had to question the relationship between intellectuals and society in general and between intellectuals and the working class in particular. We needed to understand our role in mass struggles, and we needed to understand our position in society. We had to examine the university as a site of struggle over ideas and resources, and we had to begin building on the existing debates about how we could change the campus/community status quo and in what ways we could make interventions on campus.

We set up a seminar programme for which we worked collectively with the assistance of Catherine Kell, the CER project organiser. As the bursary programme ran for two years we felt we had the time to dedicate to the very necessary task of discussing the issues outlined above. Our skills-training, towards the practical production of educational resources, was programmed for the second half of the year. Our initial idea was to familiarise ourselves with the current debates, and then to follow this with intensive skills-training to teach ourselves how to popularise and make accessible the research we were each doing for our masters degrees. In this we were developing an approach that acknowledges the influence of current politics on academia, seeing the university as a site of struggle, and understanding the need for us to respond appropriately to the broad context in which we work.

The production and presentation of knowledge are my main concerns - how knowledge is produced, and where, how, to whom and to what purpose this knowledge is presented. I have thus examined in Chapter Two the academic environment in South Africa, looking at the context in which researchers have responded to community needs, with reference to a specific education project at the University of Cape Town.

I have focussed on the Western Cape for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is the geographical area in which I am situated. Secondly, the issue of Hottentot/Khoi-Khoi/herder history⁶ has particular pertinence in the Western Cape - the area inhabited by the herders for about two thousand years prior to the arrival of van Riebeeck in 1652,⁷ and the area in which contact between herders and European settlers first took place. Herders, as a historical group, also take their place in the arena of land rights issues along with aboriginal Australians and Americans. The difference in South Africa is that there are few active groups today who are claiming herder heritage.⁸ This could be linked variously to a) the negative historical presentation of Hottentots, and b) the need in South Africa to develop a sense of national unity where *group* land rights are no longer at issue.

When I first began research towards my Masters degree, I firmly believed in a notion of "our past", in a notion of a "national heritage", a past that belonged to all of us in South Africa, a history of which we could all be proud, and thus necessarily a history alternative to the one traditionally presented in most public media. I knew that in complex ways the presentation of the past to the public was closely linked to the ideologically bound production of knowledge. I was most concerned with the way that the Cape herders had been presented to the point where words like "hotnot"⁹ and "boesman"¹⁰ had become insulting terms. I knew, for example, that Hottentots became stereotyped as "lazy, barbarous, stinking half-humans with no religion", due to the reports of European travellers who did not have the ability to entertain and understand a world-view different to their own. And I knew that this image of the Hottentots has been passed on in textual and visual presentations for hundreds of years.

What I initially believed was needed was for more researchers to show that the "Hottentot" image of herders was wrong. This could be done, I thought, by presenting *truthful*, progressive versions of herder history, based on the academic research available in journals. Once popularised, these could then be presented to teach a different version of the past, a version of which we could want to be a part, a version we could all, as South Africans, claim as part of "our past". As Trigger (1985:11) says: "It is widely acknowledged that what we believe to be true about modern peoples influences our understanding of their history, just as what we believe about historical groups helps

6 The terms *herder*, *Hottentot* and *Khoi-Khoi* have variously been used to refer to the groups of pastoralists in the Western Cape encountered by European travellers and settlers. The currently accepted academic usage is that *herder* refers to the economy of the group, *Khoi-Khoi* is the name herders used to define themselves and *Hottentot* is the name coined by the Dutch in reference to herders they encountered. For a discussion of these terms see for example Jenkins and Tobias (1977), Whisson (1985), Wilson (1985) and Elphick (1985).

7 See Hall and Smith (1986).

8 See Whisson (1981) on landrights in Simonstown, Cape.

9 This word is a shortened version of "Hottentot". For the most recent public example of the use of this word as an insult, see newscip in Appendix A on Lt. G. Rockman, a rebel South African policeman who spoke out against the levels of violence used by South African riot-control police units.

10 This word is the Afrikaans translation of "Bushman".

to shape our opinions of their descendants". Agreeing with this, I believed it was a simple issue of presenting a progressive and positive history about herders in order to shape a different understanding of "our past", one that included and acknowledged all the traditionally unacknowledged actors in South Africa's past for the contributions made to what we are today.

But these issues are complex, and in Chapter Three I examine some of these in relation to the "past as a site of struggle". My research has been based on the premise that the past is a highly contested area of knowledge, the control of such knowledge resting with those in power who are able to present knowledge about the past in terms of the dominant ideology. Meli (1986:1), in a paper titled *The Past in Education: Apartheid and Racism in the Education system in South Africa*, states that an aim of colonialism and its strategies was to "inculcate among the oppressed a feeling of inferiority towards and rejection of their own heritage and potential". This element of colonialist practise applies to the situation in which the word "hotnot" is regarded as insulting.

A brief discussion of ideology is needed here. I reject the often-used Althusserian notion of ideology as "false consciousness", as this implies that there is a true consciousness to be attained. I regard this as, in a sense, "anti-ideology". Ideology is rather the systems of perception through which we understand the world, or our experience of the world. Catherine Belsey (1980) associates ideology with "common sense", rather than with a coherent system of beliefs, defining "common sense" as the "collective and timeless wisdom whose unquestioned presence seems to be the source and guarantee of everything we take for granted"(1980:3). I would say that two types of ideologies exist - those of dominance and those of resistance. The latter arise as a result of cracks in the former, where "common sense" understandings begin to change, allowing for different interpretations of experience. Callinicos (1983) proposes that if we take seriously the determination of ideologies by the class struggle, then what matters is that ideologies are the "forms in which men [sic] become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" (1983:135). I find Callinicos' definition of ideologies useful: "practises which function symbolically, usually through the generation of utterances, subject to definite norms and constraints ... very often these norms and constraints derive from the prevailing structure of class and power" (1983:135).

I believe that we all perceive and understand within an ideological system - we can never operate outside of ideology. To a certain extent we can distance ourselves enough to recognise the ideology through which we make sense of our experiences. The workings of ideology are thus relevant in two aspects of my work - firstly, the ideologies through which versions of the past are presented and understood; and secondly, the

ideological constraints on researchers who may believe in the possibility of a "neutral, objective, scientific and truthful" past and, I hastily add, the ideologies at work on those of us who believe that such a "past" is not possible. Believing, as I do, that we all operate within ideologies, means believing that what we do in our research - our choices, our analyses, our presentations - are done from biased positions. I would argue here not to see bias as something distasteful, but rather as an issue of political choice, mostly made unconsciously (the nature of ideology), in all our work. We make political choices, whether that be the politics of positivism and objective truth, or whether it be the politics of acknowledging choice. I would opt for the latter.

The manner in which knowledge about the past is produced and presented is of particular interest to me as an archaeologist. The calls for People's History and alternatives to South African state history highlight the manner in which the past is a "site of struggle" and raise questions around the ways in which archaeologists have participated in the writing of state histories and the response of researchers to community and organisational demands for alternative histories.

The distinction must be drawn between popularising knowledge and democratising knowledge. Many academics from both left and right have been involved in popularising knowledge, and in principle this is broadly accepted as an important post-research function. Democratising knowledge, on the other hand, "attempts to get more members of the community to participate in the generation and accreditation of knowledge." (Muller and Cloete, 1986:11). One of the more important aims of this process is to empower communities to start contesting knowledge. This in many ways has happened with regard to history in South Africa. There is no doubt that communities have begun to contest the ways in which their history has been presented. These efforts have been small on a local community history level, but on a large national scale can be seen in the rejection of what can be broadly termed "apartheid education", and in the calls for "People's History".

There are implications in this for the notion of a People's Archaeology; and while this could theoretically be defined as having the same aims and embodying the same principles as People's History, there are few examples of the practise of People's Archaeology. One way that People's Archaeology could involve researchers differently to traditional research is through a process that would highlight issues needing further research, where people working on sites are involved with the interpretation and significance of remains (which in turn provides a *practical* illustration of the dilemmas

involved when archaeology is forced to deal with the social context in which research is being conducted).¹¹

In Chapter Four I examine archaeologists as producers of the past, and the way in which we as researchers define legitimate knowledge about the past. And this past is presented in powerful public media that often pick up only on sensationalist aspects that usually, in turn, serve to perpetuate the way in which cultural "others" are constructed and perceived.

Museums are one of the main types of institution (besides formal education, school textbooks, newspapers and television) that present history to the public. In Chapter Five, I have tried to unwrap the current state of museums in South Africa relative to museums elsewhere in Southern Africa and to international debates around museums. While Southern African museums embody and reflect peculiarities of a colonial historical discourse, and South African museums specifically embody the workings of separateness or apartheid, it is clear from the international literature that many of the issues facing the presentation of history and culture in South Africa are also issues elsewhere. A research trip to Zimbabwe and Botswana revealed to me that the "colonialist bias", so evident in our South African museums, is still embodied in the museums of post-colonial, liberated countries. The problem with South African state-dominated presentations of the past is therefore, at root, apartheid - but only in that apartheid is the most extreme form in which cultural "others" have been constructed, and in which the presentation of different cultures as separate, wholly independent groups has found its extreme expression. But these presentations do not *derive* from apartheid.

I have therefore examined in Chapters Six and Seven the manner in which the table of knowledge about herders, specifically, has been constructed, and how this has found expression through the objectification of both human bodies and artefacts in museums. I analyse the ways in which the colonising and imperialist projects of the European powers in Southern Africa were dependant on certain portrayals of the "native", and in this I examine the power of naming, the colonisation of the landscape and the bodyscape, the textual exscribing of indigenous people from the landscape, and the setting up of explicit systems of difference between "settler" and "other". Europeans have for centuries wielded the power of naming, the power to describe, the power to contextualise and through this the power to shape people's imaginations. The historical gatherer-hunters and herders of Southern Africa have been objectified, admittedly in changing ways, since the first days of European settlement.

11 See Miller and Rowlands (1985).

The first colonisation of Southern Africa took place in spatial terms, and the colonised space was the body - the bodies of the other, those who were not European and by implication, those against whom Europeans could position themselves as the bearers of all that was considered good. Thus descriptions abound in the travel-writing (after 1488 and through the 17th and 18th centuries) of the blacks, who became negroes, Cafres and natives, then savages, beasts, and half-people, and then Hottentots - who were lazy, stupid, ignorant and lascivious.

While much of the travel-writing makes reference to the herders, the anthropological focus in terms of gatherer-hunters and herders has been on gatherer-hunters.¹² Both broad groups of people have been constructed into objects and images that have been manipulated, twisted, and changed according to the designs, desires and needs of the powerful.

It would be a useful project to trace in close detail the shift in mythology from "savages", worthy of extermination, to "children of nature", as the two extremes of gatherer-hunter as object. This would need to be examined in relation to similar shifts in portrayal of the herders. It has been suggested to me¹³ that the real battle over such icons/images has been played out in terms of white nationalism - white nationalism as the real area of battle. Gatherer-hunters have in the last couple of decades attracted much media-attention, and have recently been mobilised in order to open up ideological spaces. The Bushmen are now portrayed as a symbol of protected minorities ("The homeless people"), exemplifying the white cause.¹⁴ The Bushmen are currently being portrayed as a timeless underdog, forever hounded by some or other group - African cattle herders and Boers alike. Provision must thus be made for them to be allowed to live their "real" lives in peace. Echoes of the Afrikaners, the Great Trek, the Boer Republics and the Boer war, international isolation and persecution resound loudly. The Bushmen are, in this sense, an ideal symbol - they are no political threat, they are now "Namibia's problem", they are nearly "extinct" (are there any *pure* Bushmen left?), but enough *survivors* exist of which an issue can be made.

Thus I argue that it is central that the *Bushmen* are the pawn, the object being mobilised. Herders, in this framework, would be entirely unsuitable. There is not enough clarity on who the herder descendants are¹⁵ and, given that it was openly acknowledged that the settlers stole the Cape from the herders, it would not be in the

¹² See for example Lee and De Vore (1976) and Marshall (1976).

¹³ Professor Martin Hall (1989:pers.comm.)

¹⁴ See Appendix A for newspaper examples of media presentations of *Bushmen*.

¹⁵ Herders are understood to be the ancestors of members of the population group classified "Coloured". This designation, though, is extremely vague. In Proclamation 46 of 1959, Coloureds were divided into Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian, Chinese, "other Asiatic" and "other Coloured". This proclamation was declared void for reasons of vagueness by the Supreme Court in 1967 and the Population Registration Amendment Act, Number 64 of 1967, was then introduced. This allowed the State President to classify Coloureds into the same sub-groups as had been declared invalid by the Supreme Court (Omond, R. 1985:21-22).

interests of the dominant class to encourage a sense of group-based landrights in the Western Cape. Herders have thus not attained anything like the public popularity that has been afforded the Bushmen.¹⁶ They are at present too intangible, too unqualifiable, except in the terms set out hundreds of years ago.

To change the public image may invite a popular response of descendancy claims, that in turn could lead to land rights claims. With Namibian independence¹⁷ the Bushmen are now a "Namibian problem". But with regard to the herders, there have been recent public claims to "Khoi-Khoi descendancy". Alan Hendrickse, a member of the "Coloured" House of Parliament, chose the time of the Dias '88 Festival celebrations (the commemoration of the 1488 rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartholomeu Dias) to claim herder descendancy for the whole "Coloured community".¹⁸ The genetic legitimacy of such claims is not what is at issue, but rather the fact that in the face of the Hottentot image/icon, people are making heritage claims at all. The popularity of this remains to be seen.

When I began this study, I was hoping to "set the record straight" about the herders. After three years of reading and researching, I have come to agree with what now seems obvious in James Clifford's point:

"In recognising such biases ... it is well to recall that our own "full" versions will inevitably appear partial; and if many cultural portrayals now seem more limited than they once did, this is an index of the contingency and historical movement of all readings - no one reads from a neutral or final position. This rather obvious caution is often violated in new accounts that purport to set the record straight or to fill a gap in "our" knowledge" (1986:18).

Clifford goes on to make the point that there is no "whole" that can be "filled in", since it is through this filling of gaps that we become aware of other gaps. He also argues that "translations" of culture, however subtle or inventive in textual form, take place within relations of "weak" and "strong" languages (1986:22). Academic language is strong and authoritative, and in contrast it could be argued that the language of herders is relatively weak.

Our knowledge about herders is largely limited to written sources. Smith (1983a:79) states that the Nama-speaking communities, small-stock herders in Namaqualand, "are today only limited representatives of this formerly wide-spread cultural pattern ... Thus the ethnographic "present" for the anthropology of Khoi herdsmen would be the 17th and 18th centuries, as described by the early colonists and travellers". Smith (1983b:2)

16 The "children of nature" image cannot be too distant from the "noble savage" image of the 18th Century that some writers attempted to popularise.

17 March, 1990.

18 "We, the Coloured community, have nothing to celebrate with the arrival of Dias in any case as it opened the way to the past and to our oppression. Our forefathers, the indigenous Khoi, were dispossessed of their land and rights as a result" (Hendrickse, 1988).

also says with regard to the written texts on herders: "We are fortunate in having a number of extant descriptions of Khoi in the 17th century, particularly the journal of Jan van Riebeeck, which offers a day by day account of events affecting the Dutch settlement at the Cape". I want to argue that we do not have descriptions of "Khoi" in the 17th century, nor do we have an "ethnographic present" for "Khoi herdsman". Rather we have descriptions possibly of Cape herders, but who have been textually constructed as "Hottentots".

Thus in my research I am dealing with "Hottentots". I am dealing with the way in which "Hottentots" have been constructed, the way in which they have been described and written. Rather than attempt to write a "true" version of herder history, I have attempted to understand the construction of the "Hottentots" as a textual society, as a construct that only exists in the written texts. Although it is generally understood that whether we read about the "Hottentots" or the "Khoi- Khoi", the group of people, the object, the referent is the Southern African pastoralists. Belsey and Moore (1989:9-10) emphasise a point that I make similarly in relation to Hottentots - that the early feminist denunciations of patriarchy tended to retreat "into an insistence that the patriarchal account of life was false, a distortion of the truth about women ... But in general the insistence that a political practice, the subordination of women, is based on falsehood, seems to imply that there is a truth about women which is outside culture, outside language and meaning, a question of nature".

Similarly, there has existed an insistence that the presentation of Hottentots is based on a falsehood outside of which there exists a truth about herders; and this truth can be discovered outside of the language in which Hottentots have been constructed. In these terms it is impossible to find out the "truth" about herders from these different textual constructions. The issue is rather the *manner* in which herders are differently constructed and textualised. I would argue that "Khoi-Khoi" are another construction of herders (often presented in terms of being "forgotten"). What I believe would be useful to look at is when the "Hottentots" were replaced textually by the "Khoi-Khoi", when this group became differently presented.

Thus the issue, I argue, is not whether they were "really" Hottentot or "really" Khoi-Khoi, but what we can learn about the present in terms of a tradition of constructing cultural others. The *accuracy* of the 17th and 18th century descriptions of the herders is not what is at issue for me. (Perhaps this could be seen to be the ultimate imperialism - scrapping the last faint hope of retrieving pastoralist history from the written texts, in favour of using the descriptions to find out about ourselves and learn something about

the present?) There are limits to what we can learn, but as pointed out by Clifford (quoted above) no doubt this will change as our questions change.

Feminist readers, for example, might ask a range of questions, such as how a text represents women, what it says about gender relations, and how it defines sexual difference. This is my point of departure in relation to the travel-writing. And the questions I am asking are:

"How do the texts represent women?", and also "How do the texts represent men?". From this I can ask "How do the texts define sexual difference?" where this difference is ultimately the difference between women and men, but is described as the difference between "us and them", between colonisers and colonised.

Chapters Six and Seven could be seen as what Anne Solomon (1989:abstract) defines as the "more limited critique of gender "bias" and masculinist models". The purpose is to look at the structure of the masculinist societal models perpetuated in travel-writing through to current presentations, examining the crossroads of racism and sexism. For example, it is interesting to note that in the existing canon of writing on Hottentots/Khoi-Khoi/herders, far greater attention has been paid to "the Hottentot Apron" than to Hottentot men's "semi-castration" or to their "huge members".

What is important, and Solomon (1989) emphasises this in her work, is the way in which cultural texts operate in relation to social processes. For me this would imply looking at how the travel-writing and ethnographic narratives operate in relation to the social processes of European colonisation. And I argue that the first act of colonisation was occupying the space of bodies, by naming and describing. The idea of social processes is a complex one: while it would be simpler to analyse the processes within colonist society, these processes were dependant upon the "natives", the people being colonised. Colonial processes, it is a truism to say, were dependant upon, or certainly in response to, the activities of the colonised - who either condoned or opposed, allowed or restricted, co-operated with or resisted the activities of settlement by Europeans to the extent that from the European perspective, there came to exist a definable "native problem".

It is important to note that while travel-writing and ethnographic texts are certainly cultural texts, they can not in any sense be said to be herder cultural texts. Rather they are part of the body of cultural texts of European settlers, and in this sense they are most certainly artefacts. They can also be defined as "gendered artefacts", in that they played, and still play, a role in the construction of the meaning of the terms *masculine* and *feminine*. I think that the real value of such analyses will be when we are able to

define clearly, and gain access to, herder cultural texts, such as (Solomon 1989) artefacts, narratives and spatial organisation. In my analysis of the travel-writing one of the features, as elucidated by Pratt (1986), is that herder narratives are absent from the text. The travel writing, a filtering of incidents through the particular ideology of the European travel-writers, contains hardly any contact with, or dialogue with, herders.

It is in these cultural texts that the structured and structuring nature of European gender concepts find their expression. I would argue that racism is derived from the basic gendering oppositions of male:female, translated to powerful:powerless in the European male-supremacist social scheme. Textual criticism is thus absolutely central in its being used to provide not truth about the objects of the documents, but clues about relations of power. I argue, after Dworkin (1981), that all relations of power are derived from the basic male supremacist assumption of power based on owning others' bodies (women and colonised) in attempts to assert their own sexual supremacy. Chapters Six and Seven contain, essentially, an examination of the relations of power as expressed in literary and display texts. Such relations of power are currently being examined in South African documents of other kinds - artefacts, housing structures, ceramics.¹⁹

In my work I have looked at possibilities for a People's Archaeology, for different kinds of museums, and for different ways of researching. This necessarily entails understanding the power of intellectuals over community, of scientific knowledge over experiential knowledge, of museums over visitors, of men over women, of colonisers over colonised and of the present over the past. It is important to understand the ways in which specific archaeologies are used to enhance existing relations of power. Such an understanding will contribute to the creation of new archaeologies that could shift the balance of power. Understanding the power dynamics operative in the production and presentation of knowledge is central to the development of a different kind of archaeology.

¹⁹ See for example Hall (1990a).

CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNITY EDUCATION RESOURCES

"What should be the relationship between the national liberation struggles in Southern Africa and the priorities determined by these, on the one hand, and research and writing on the other?" (Harold Wolpe, 1986:72)

"...it is not possible:

- 1) to separate theory from practise;**
- 2) to separate the act of knowing existing knowledge from the act of creating knowledge;**
- 3) to separate teaching from learning, educating from being educated." (Paolo Freire, 1978:89)**

The pursuit of knowledge in general and academic research in particular can never be for its own sake.¹ Knowledge performs a social function and, whatever the intentions of the researcher, will always serve the interests of one or other class in a society that is divided by exploitation and oppression. Thus the production of knowledge is inevitably partisan, and the only choice lies in the decision as to which social and political interests to serve.

In the field of archaeology most of our work is publicly funded in some or other way. This makes us both socially and financially accountable, an accountability that is not just to like-minded colleagues, but to politicians, paupers, pastoralists and peasants - in fact to a general public whose questions can be acute and pertinent (Wilding 1986). The usefulness of particular research can only be determined through ensuring that the content, purpose and form of the material produced is carefully targeted and meets a real need. This would have to be defined through negotiation with, and accountability to, the groups or organisations with which we work (CER 1987).

Mass struggles and apartheid education

The upsurge of mass struggle in South Africa since the 1970's has been a process that, particularly, has seen the emergence of many community-based organisations². Operating at a number of different levels, through different forms of struggle, these organisations have played a prominent role in the national liberation struggle. Aside

¹ The issues in this chapter have been discussed extensively within the 1987-1988 Masters Group in the Community Education Resources Project, and I have thus relied heavily on Cathy Kell's paper (Kell 1989), which was informed by many of these discussions, for this argument.

² See for example Race Relations Survey 1988/1989 (1989:705-709), Moss and Obery (eds.) (1987).

from trade unions, community organisations and civic associations,³ womens', students' and cultural organisations have been very important in raising strategic and tactical questions about the advancement of the liberation struggle.

There have been two main thrusts of these struggles. Firstly, the emergence of a wide range of mass-based community organisations has seen the rise of working class leadership that has extended beyond the bounds of the trade unions (the traditional site of working class struggle). Secondly, the broadening out beyond the work place of struggles against oppression and exploitation has seen the inclusion of issues such as rent, inflation and education into the struggle against apartheid. The increasingly broad base of community organisation has had the effect of a consolidation of community demands, with many sectors of the oppressed communities in South Africa (eg. youth, women, civics) rallying around issues in joint action. The struggles of 1984 and 1985 particularly demonstrated the extent to which students had become a major force in the liberation struggle - with involvement in these and subsequent years, in school boycotts, protest marches, rent issues, and stayaways. As a part of these struggles came community-based demands for access to knowledge, skills and educational resources, and calls for "*education for liberation*" accompanied this broadening of involvement.⁴ Encompassed in these demands was the call for histories alternative to those made available by the state through both formal schooling and informal means (such as the mass media).

Formal schooling has been a particular site of struggle because of the obvious disparities in resources allocated to the separate White, Coloured, Indian and African education departments. The legacy of apartheid education in South Africa stems formally from the Institute for Christian National Education of the Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK),⁵ and is exemplified in their "formulated directive" published in 1948 (the year the Nationalist Party came to power). On History, the document states:

"History must be viewed as a fulfillment of God's plan for the world and the human race...we believe that God ...willed the separate nations and people; that He gave each separated nation and people its special vocation, task and gifts ...Youth can only ...take over the task of the older generation if it obtains in history instruction a real vision of the nation's origin, its cultural inheritance, and of the content of the proper trend of inheritance" (Projects Committee, n.d.:19).⁶

On the education of "others", the document states:

³ The word *civics* or *civic associations* refers to ratepayers associations and groupings established to deal with community issues such as rents, electricity, roads, waterworks and so on.

⁴ For discussions of these developments in the sphere of education see Campbell (1986), Chisholm (1986), Obery (1986), Muller (1987) and Van den Heever (1987).

⁵ The South African federation of Afrikaans cultural organisations.

⁶ From a document produced by the Projects Committee of the Student Representative Council at the University of Cape Town (date unknown).

"We believe that the Coloured man can only be truly happy when he has been Christianised and that he will be proof against his own heathen ideology ... We believe that the education and task of White South Africa with respect to the Native is to Christianise him and help him on a cultural basis, and this ... has found its immediate application in the principles of trusteeship, not placing the Native on the level of the White, and in segregation" (Projects Committee, n.d:22).⁷

The project of state education in South Africa has thus been clear. Four basic points can be made about school education in South Africa:

1. South African education is divided along racially-defined (and thus, racist) lines - White, Coloured, Indian and African - and is controlled accordingly: the Department of Education and Culture controls white, coloured and Indian education through "white own affairs"/"coloured own affairs"/"Indian own affairs", and the Department of Education and Training controls African education;⁸
2. It is highly unequal, reflected in differential state expenditure;⁹
3. It is forcefully and explicitly controlled by ruling ideology - for example, in July 1988 the Minister of Education and Development Aid stated in Parliament that action was being taken against schools at which "people's education" had been taught;¹⁰
4. It is extremely authoritarian.

This system has been challenged by progressive student and teacher organisations through the linking of education struggles to broader political struggles. And at the same time "the struggle for People's Education is no longer a struggle of the students alone. It has become a struggle of the whole community with the involvement of all sections of the community. This is not something which has happened in the school sphere alone; it reflects a new level of development in the struggle as a whole" (Sisulu, 1986:107).

The University as a site of struggle

"Educational institutions have become a target area for political action and debate. Universities have to respond to this challenge." (Beyers Naude, 1985)¹¹

The general political struggle encompasses or represents the struggle over ideas and resources. In broader society, this is the framework in which the struggle for majority rule and democratisation of structures in society takes place. Regarding the struggle over ideas and resources, the real battle is over how ideas/research are developed, how they are used/appropriated, and how the production of ideas is financed.

⁷ Ibid. p.22.

⁸ Race Relations Survey 1988/1989.

⁹ See Race Relations Survey 1988/1989 (1989:235-303).

¹⁰ Race Relations Survey 1988/1989 (1989:255).

¹¹ Quoted in Perceptions of Wits Report (1986:1).

The militant struggles of 1985 and 1986 have had important spin-off effects in the academic sphere as well as in the schools. The struggle for people's education has meant a redefinition of the educational terrain, causing important shifts within South Africa's universities. The struggle in the liberal universities has been taking place around the interests served by universities and their role in society. The contradictions in this struggle exist between firstly, the role that certain sectors of the liberal universities play in upholding and reproducing class relations; and secondly, the growth of progressive student, worker and academic organisations which have links with the mass democratic movement. It is largely these latter sectors (progressive students, workers and academics), responding to the challenges, who are questioning the role of universities and who have brought struggle around ideas and resources right into the university context. The liberal university is thus a place of contradictions, shown in the manner in which certain sectors of such universities operate explicitly to reproduce existing class relations, while space exists for progressive forces to challenge the manner in which the status quo is perpetuated within the university environment.

Liberal universities in South Africa, while having an established tradition of protesting the violation of human rights institutionalised in the policies of apartheid, have at the same time sought to avoid coherent political intervention. The possibility of reconciling these two positions has only existed as long as the conflicts generated by Apartheid have appeared removed from the campus itself, allowing members of the university to see themselves as removed from the mainstream of apartheid policies, protected in a sense by the liberal values that typify such campuses. In recent years, however, the crisis in education in South Africa has become acute to the point of threatening this protective membrane (Goosen and Hall, 1989). This is reflected in views expressed in the *Perceptions of Wits Report*,¹² whereby a widespread community view is that universities (in this case the University of the Witwatersrand) should become more closely involved with the community, orienting themselves more directly towards community needs - as a university effort, and not simply as the task of well-intentioned individuals.

¹² *Perceptions of Wits Report* (1986).

Space at universities

As a result of mass-based struggles and their effects on education in general, important gains were made during 1985 and 1986, in terms of initiatives being taken "within the political space offered by the relative autonomy of the liberal university" (Kell, 1989:1). There has to be an acknowledgement of the nature of the political space within liberal universities in which progressives can operate. I would argue that this space has not had to be fought for. Rather, the space currently occupied by progressive projects at liberal universities is space that is inherent in the structure of liberal universities. It is theoretically provided for by the liberal notion of *academic freedom*. In South Africa this space takes on particular importance in phases of intensified state repression.¹³ The state's need to control sources of information and ideas has been an important part of their strategy of repression.¹⁴ The function of universities thus becomes particularly important with regard to the activities of producing knowledge and generating ideas. Progressive factions within liberal universities have attempted to find ways in which universities can serve and benefit the mass democratic movement, and much pioneering work is being done to contribute to a process of social change (Perceptions of Wits Report, 1986). In order for the university environment to benefit a society in transformation, "much effort and redirecting of priorities will need to be put into scholarship" (Kell, 1989:2).¹⁵

The extent to which the university can be a site of struggle relates to the intensity of struggle in wider society, and there are various forms in which this struggle would become manifest at universities:

1. the forging of links between university and community,
2. student organisation within the university context,
3. academic staff organisation within the university context,
4. worker organisation within the university context,
5. research orientation,
6. access to resources such as lecture theatres, venues and equipment,
7. curriculum - reworking towards progressive content,
8. progressive academics interacting successfully with organisations.

¹³ Note must be taken here of the recent shifts in political terrain as a result of, amongst other things, the unbanning of many organisations on February 2, 1990 - the most significant being the African National Congress, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the South African Communist Party.

¹⁴ Kell (1989) and see also Armstrong (1987).

¹⁵ But Kell argues that closer liaison with the mass democratic movement should not **prevent** areas of scholarship from being centres of critical and creative thought. See also Wolpe (1986) in this regard.

Gaining access to the university

The development of a "more activist concept of research" (Wolpe, 1986:73) has had important effects within the universities, and the main vehicle for this has been the organised struggles of the campus-based mass organisations, as part of the democratic movement. Until now, uneven opportunities and restrictions that have been imposed on black and white intellectuals by apartheid have meant that research work has become the domain of people who are objectively most distant from the experience of oppression, and from the activities of mass organisations. Although the contribution of white left intellectuals has been enormous, there is a perception that this research relegates the question of national oppression and racial domination to a secondary epistemological status (Kell 1989).

It is here that the role of academics on campuses is highlighted. The issue of organising academics becomes central in any discussion around the struggle over resources at the university and efforts at transforming through, amongst other things, the democratisation of structures and making the university accessible (university here in the sense of built environment, peopled environment and the environment of knowledge and ideas). In terms of defining debate, setting criteria for promotion, publishing in journals, determining curricula, admissions policies, and the extent to which academics are trying to transform the university, it becomes clear that academics can be seen as, traditionally, the organisers of bourgeois hegemony at universities. In terms of power relations within liberal universities, the role of progressive academics is central in the efforts to shift the balance of power away from bourgeois hegemony.

Kell outlines various ways in which progressive academics can make their skills accessible to the mass democratic movement.

This can be done by offering specialist skills to organisations - such as doctors participating in detainees' clinics or architects advising on the feasibility of upgrading schemes. Skills can be made available through primary research that can take a number of forms - for example, research into possible forms of a post-apartheid South Africa which can help shape short- and long-term planning and strategies (ie. policy related research). Research into the effects of apartheid - such as unemployment, housing shortages, urbanisation and repression is particularly needed by the mass democratic movement. Another form of research is that which makes available statistics for use by organisations in defining campaigns - such as the demographic changes in a particular area that might affect the composition of the trade union movement. Skills can be made

available through work that analyses the effectiveness of particular forms of mass action such as a stayaway or boycott (ie. monitoring research), or through doing research that is directly commissioned by an organisation, and by carrying out historical research that presents alternatives to ruling class versions of history.

The types of research and assistance outlined above can only really be useful if synthesised into forms which make it genuinely accessible to organisations. Accessible material can take a number of forms. Those discussed and reviewed within the Community Education Resources Project (CER) are for example, semi-processed data and collections of readings and other useful printed matter, briefings and booklets that synthesise primary research into accessible form and language, and exposés written for a popular audience. Programme outlines for educational use in organisations are particularly important for suggesting possible ways of using the research material, as are skills-training programmes. Other forms could be People's Histories which, through participatory work, popularise historical research, and the development of curricula which incorporate new research towards use in schools to further the struggle for a People's Education.

Extension Services

The issue of political space on liberal campuses again enters the debate at this point: how are the above research and educational objectives achieved? Many of the more "activist intellectuals" at the University of Cape Town (UCT) have come to make their services available in some of the above forms through campus-based service organisations. These have been called extension services at UCT. While the issue of service organisations generally is being debated off-campus within the mass democratic movement,¹⁶ the establishment of service projects or extension services on university campuses brings with it specific problems in the context of the university as a site of struggle. Those intellectuals working within extension service projects can become a sort of left elite, with access to the mass democratic organisations from the comfortable home of the university. At the same time it is possible for them to turn their backs on the struggles within the university. The potential for the liberal constituency of the university to support the idea of extension services as projects that have as their focus off-campus is strong, as it allows the university to leave its teaching and research functions intact, "unmarred and untouched by the struggles around them" (Kell 1989), and the university can then put all its good intentions (with regard to playing a relevant anti-apartheid role) into this extension service work. This, while being paternalistic,

¹⁶ See Naidoo (1987).

would also marginalise the work as part of the university's functions, and pose no threat to the university's liberal constituency.

Service organisations have played a role on UCT campus for some years. The South African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) was set up in 1976. The Industrial Health Research Group (IHRG) was set up in 1980. The Industrial Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) was set up in 1983. These are three of the projects that have in various ways functioned to serve the disadvantaged community.¹⁷

But it was only really after the establishment of the *Working Group on Progressive Education*¹⁸ in late 1985 that progressive service organisations and academics were mobilised around the issue of the role of extension service work in transforming the liberal universities.

At the formation of the *Working Group on Progressive Education* in November 1985 various topics were identified for intensive investigation and debate by study groups consisting of interested members. One of these groups centred around professional services, and discussion addressed questions of how the skills available in the university were being used by the community, how the university was responding to demands by the community for these skills, and how structures could be changed to make these skills more accessible to the disadvantaged community in particular.

In 1986 the Extension Services Working Group was set up as a Progressive Education Group (PEG)¹⁹ interest group. This group recognised that extension work, always part of the universities' activities, has been substantially loaded in favour of the business community and state-run organisations, rather than to the disadvantaged and disenfranchised people of South Africa. This group thus engaged in the struggle within the university. This struggle was firstly, to gain recognition for extension work as a third branch of the university's functions, along with formal teaching and publication-oriented research and secondly, to gain recognition for work produced in the form of reports, informational packages, booklets and briefs, for example, as integral to the work of an academic staff member.²⁰

17 By "disadvantaged community" it is generally meant those groups of people in South Africa who are deprived of access to the resources of the country and of equitable access to the decision-making processes of the country (Perceptions of Wits Report, 1986:2).

18 In response to the mass struggles in 1985, particularly around education, the Working Group For Progressive Education, was set up at UCT.

19 The Working Group on Progressive Education was later known as the Progressive Education Group (PEG). The PEG has since been incorporated into the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA), a recently formed national progressive academic staff association - a move which has in a sense institutionalised progressive space on UCT campus.

20 The enormous pressure on academics at UCT to publish their research in accredited academic journals has been partly applied through the state, which relates the state subsidy formula to the number of academic papers published. This factor has definitely had an influence on the limited extent to which academics at the liberal universities have made their skills more immediately accessible to mass organisations.

Community Education Resources

The Community Education Resources Project was set up within the Centre for African Studies at UCT at the end of 1985, in response to violent struggles around education in that year, and amidst repeated calls for resources such as the universities should have been able to offer - particularly in the area of alternative education materials (alternative to state-propagated ideas). CER is not a research unit itself, but draws on research being done within a range of departments.

The role of the Community Education Resources Project "lies primarily in linking the research and extension service functions in a progressive approach in order to contribute towards the struggle to transform the University" (Kell, 1989:5).

There are three main issues that have been important in setting up such a project. Firstly, the assumption was made that CER would draw on research already being done within the university - a project that would attempt to make existing research materials "accessible". Secondly, little consultation with community organisations took place on the setting up of the project, and although the intention existed to do so, there was little clarity on how to do so. Thirdly, the number of academics who are interested in the progressive work of CER is very small.

After four years, the CER project now has the following aims:

1. to facilitate the use of the resources, research and skills of the university by progressive organisations and the oppressed community;
2. to bring ideas and experience gained in the process of servicing progressive organisations (in particular, the building of links with the mass democratic movement) back into the university environment in order to contribute towards the progressive transformation of the theory and practice of teaching and research;
3. to pursue research and produce material in accessible form, which can be utilised by the oppressed community.

Towards this end, CER has organised a number of projects.

These projects have included training courses for members of progressive service agencies, work with members of the Black Student's Society at UCT, a project with Honours students, and a project with Masters students.

The CER Masters Project

Applications are invited from current or prospective Masters candidates in the Faculties of Social Science and Humanities, Arts, Fine Art and Architecture, Education, Law.

The successful applicant will be required to participate in a programme on the methodology of community education and to produce resources for community education on the basis of their research.

Preference will be given to candidates who have been involved in progressive organisations and whose research proposal addresses specific organisational needs. Preference will also be given to those coming from a disadvantaged background.

Post-graduate Studentship
Community Education Resources
Centre for African Studies
University of Cape Town
1989

Five Masters students were selected for the first programme which ran from January 1987 to December 1988. As Masters students participating in the project, we were selected on the basis of our research and the possibilities of "making our research accessible". The CER publications policy (amongst other CER documents) states that "CER is committed to making educational resources available to the broad community". Overtly, that was our task - to work with organisations at producing our masters research in accessible form, and making these available to potential user groups. As we were a new project, our first task was to understand our position - as a group of students, as university-based researchers, and as participants in a university-based "popularising" project.

In one of our first discussions as a group we resolved that firstly, the common ground linking the student's different projects was the issue of teaching and training methodology, with a particular focus on challenging existing "information-giving" methods of teaching and presentation of ideas. We agreed that we would try to understand our practical resource work in terms of different theories of learning. Through this analysis we hoped to pose alternative methods which drew on the learner's known experience to develop in learners a dynamic and critical understanding of the structures and processes which shape their lives.

Secondly, we noted that the Community Education Resources Project was a new initiative in the University, one that may set a precedent for other sections of the university. We therefore needed to set ourselves clear objectives and evaluate our progress, while keeping detailed records of the process. In doing this, we would inform

ourselves of discussion within UCT and, more broadly about the role of the university in relation to the community, the liberation struggle and the future South Africa.

We discussed many issues over a six-month period. These included the role of intellectuals in the mass movement, the historical roots of the separation between theory and practise, and the changing historical contexts in which theory is developed and research carried out. We discussed university-based research in relation to the mass movement, the state of struggle over education and resources, the role of education work in the present struggle in South Africa and other countries, and the University of Cape Town specifically in relation to the mass movement. We also looked at issues such as the role of intellectuals in the struggle for a truly democratic society, what is meant by working class leadership, how leadership is developed, and how we arrive at a position of skills reversal (of skills held by the possessing classes). We discussed the notion of *relevant* research, the relationship between education and democracy and the need for political education, and we examined the use of historical information to debate political points in the present.

Our central theme was to understand the responses of academics to the state of struggle - why have academics responded/not responded overtly to the state of struggle, and if they have, what forms has this response taken. We debated the relationship between knowledge and power, understanding the effects of the "neutrality of scientific research" stance as a bourgeois myth. We also examined the issue of extension services on campuses and traditional academe disallowing full participation in such projects due to publication pressure and funding structures.

If the role of so-called progressive researchers is defined as, or restricted to, providing material on already defined policy, the clear possibility exists for research to be reduced to an overtly ideological or propagandistic function, denying the potential value of research work (Wolpe 1986). The idea of autonomy of researchers has been a hotly debated topic in seminars at Western Cape universities. There exist two main positions. The first is that research must be value free, politically neutral, objective, with its own autonomous rationality and logic, where research priorities are internally generated, and must therefore be protected from political intervention. The second is that research cannot be value free, and must be relevant to political and social concerns, *but* the practise of science in research institutions is assumed to produce superior knowledge, providing firmer foundations for decisions about research than those generated in the liberation movement. Both positions assume that valid research topics can only be derived from the "logic" of scientific work. An argument against this is that

the priorities of research should be those priorities defined at a political level, not as conclusions, but as starting points (Wolpe 1986).²¹

Our conclusion was that, for progressive researchers, it is the needs and goals of progressive organisations which must be the central reference points for defining the content, form, purpose and the accessibility of progressive research. It is in this context that progressive researchers need to define partisanship and accountability. Critical research aimed at policies and practises of the mass movement can be of value if the starting point is the conviction that critical findings can assist in building the mass democratic movement. I argue that if research is motivated by the needs of the mass struggle, then this calls for communication between independent research and mass organisations, and implies a structured relationship to ensure responsibility, accountability and the effectiveness of independent research. But I do not argue that this is the only type of research that can be regarded as *progressive*. In other words, a structured relationship between researcher and organisation is not the defining characteristic of *progressive* research. It is acknowledged that not all areas of research are of *immediate* use to organisations, or to the liberation struggle. This does not invalidate such research or make it less valuable in the long run, but rather broadens to the benefit of the mass democratic movement, the definition of "progressive research".

Making Research Accessible

Accessibility of research is one of the central concerns here. Five main points emerged out of the CER Masters' group discussions. Firstly, the tradition of popular history that has emerged within academia has tended to concern itself more with discovering the history of the oppressed rather than making history accessible to them.²² As such these popular histories tend to be politically directionless and lacking in educational purpose. Secondly, we felt it is extremely important in our work to research the experiences of struggle of the oppressed precisely in order to facilitate reflection on *experience* as a politically educational process.

Thirdly, there is no such thing as "the needs of the community" in general. Given different experiences of struggle and organisation within the community, as well as different levels of consciousness and intellectual skill, educational materials need to be designed for quite specific audiences. In a similar vein, we cannot produce material on

²¹ When writers discuss the generation of knowledge which could benefit the mass democratic movement, the areas of knowledge are generally limited to the social sciences - see for example Muller and Cloete (1986). This is partly because it is within the social sciences that most progressive research takes place. This could be seen to support the idea that "scientific" research has its own internal logic that guides the questions of research, rather than being guided by the needs and demands of certain sectors of society. I refer to this "societal guidance" in Chapter Six with reference to the development of human biology as a science in the 19th century, and the extent to which political priorities defined the conclusions of research.

²² See Chapter Three.

the assumption that an organisation has the time or skills to synthesise and adapt it for its own use. As a result it is important to know precisely to what purpose the information is to be put (education workshops, pamphlets, articles etc.) and what means the organisation has to do so. In our consideration of a range of educational resources there was a strong feeling that material needed to be well structured and directed around its specific educational purpose and should not just be left for users to make of it what they want.

Fourthly, to write simply and accessibly requires a lot more skill than is required for a journal article, and many of the projects we spoke to stressed this.

Fifthly, it appears as though a considerable amount of popular material that is produced lacks a clear educational methodology (such as methodologies practised on the basis of the work of Paolo Freire).²³ Fairly untested assumptions about what workers like to read and how adults learn, for example, are often used as reference points.²⁴ This is a crucial area for investigation if we are not to fall into the same trap, using homespun philosophies as our reference points. To make headway with the development of an educational methodology is on the one hand a task of theoretical research. At the same time we need to develop a practise of testing out material and of developing it as far as is possible with the people who will use it.

"...we do believe that academics, activists and students all benefit from being able to concretely explore the relationship between knowledge and action" (Kell, 1989:11).

The main issue with which CER and I have engaged has been the relationship between the production and the presentation of knowledge - how knowledge is produced and how, where, to whom and to what purpose knowledge is presented. It is in the context of the above issues that are situated the educational challenges facing archaeology as a discipline and archaeologists as researchers in South Africa. The role of archaeologists who regard themselves as progressive must be defined in terms of the calls for people's education, people's history, and efforts to research in different ways towards the development of a people's archaeology, that takes into account the ways in which "the past" is a site of struggle.

²³ See Freire (1978).

²⁴ Issues such as theories of learning are only now being examined in the context of South African education projects. I can do no justice to them in a work of this nature. While an understanding of these issues is in many ways fundamental to a project like this, it has not been possible for me to investigate this field. In order to understand for example, the dynamics between viewer and display in museums, researchers need to develop our understanding of how people learn, and how we make sense of what we see.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PAST AS A SITE OF STRUGGLE

"The struggle surrounding the interpretation and explanation of South African history is an aspect of the struggle for human dignity and against apartheid."

(F. Meli, 1986:1)

"History, we believe, can empower people, although not merely by celebrating the past or by suggesting "lessons" to apply to the present. History can be used to teach people that the social, political, economic and cultural institutions that delimit contemporary life are not timeless but rather the products of human agency and historical choices. Grasping the contingent nature of the past can break the tyranny of the present; seeing how historical actors made and remade social life, we can gain a new vision of our own present and future. That is perhaps the most important lesson that historians can help people to draw from the past." (Benson *et al*, 1986:xiii-xiv)

In the previous chapter I outlined the concerns of Community Education Resources (CER), and the discussions we held in this project's Master's Group. The general concerns of the project as a whole are around knowledge as a site of struggle, where "legitimate" knowledge is produced in powerfully accredited environments, such as universities. My specific concern within these debates is about "the past" as a site of struggle, about how knowledge about the past is contested between producers of the past (generally academics) and consumers of the past. This struggle is not only around the content of history - it is also around the process by which such knowledge is produced.

CONSTRUCTION ONE¹

A description of the greater part of Africa south of the Zambezi shows that vegetation in the dry season is scanty. The air, on the other hand, is invigorating, and the climate is favourable for European settlement. Yet South Africa is sparsely populated by people of European origin. Before the seventeenth century it was utterly neglected as a field for colonization.² In South Africa, the prehistoric era terminated scarcely three hundred years ago, and when the first European visitors began to reveal the sub-continent in the period of the great geographical discoveries, Bushman and Hottentot were still fashioning implements of quartz and shale.³

Recent archaeological investigations indicate that a number of different stone-implement cultures, clearly separated in time as well as in character, have existed in this country. The particular races that left these relics of ancient culture are unknown to us. Of one thing only we are certain - that once upon a time the Bushmen wandered undisturbed over all of Southern Africa. These Bushmen were real relics of the Stone Age.⁴ The first South African people of whom we have any historic record are the Bushmen, a pygmy race of hunters, almost extinct today.⁵ These savage little people were still in the first stage of man's progress - the hunting stage - and they never got beyond it. These little men were very primitive. For example, their language did not consist of many words, and they could only count up to three.⁶ At the dawn of written history, Bushmen had probably been in occupation of the country for several thousand years. Their progress in the arts of civilization has been conspicuously slow.⁷

It would be a biological crime if we allowed such a peculiar race to die out, because it is a race which looks more like a baboon than a baboon itself does. It is difficult to say what a genuine Bushman looks like. We look upon them as part of the fauna of the country.⁸ (It is the opinion of Dr. R. Broom, the well-known palaeontologist, that the present-day Koranna is the somewhat degenerate descendant of the people whose stone implements have been found in abundance at Douglas and Barkley West in the gravels of the Vaal River terraces.)⁹ Despite their nomadic mode of life and entire inability to assimilate the culture of more advanced peoples, the Bushmen possessed a rare gift for naturalistic painting.¹⁰ Even before the advent of the white man in South Africa, these primitive Bushmen were

¹ This illustrative text is a compilation of quotes from various sources. Each quote is sourced in the footnotes.

² Hattersley (1933:7).

³ Hattersley (1933:9).

⁴ Ziervogel (n.d.:1).

⁵ Fairbridge (1918:7).

⁶ Dodd and Cordingley (n.d.:11).

⁷ Hattersley (1933:11).

⁸ Colonel Denys Reitz, then Minister for Native Affairs, talking in Parliament, April 3, 1941, quoted in: Marshall and Ritchie (1984:14).

⁹ Hattersley (1933:10-11).

¹⁰ Hattersley (1933:12).

becoming extinct. They were being forced out of their hunting grounds by their stronger Hottentot neighbours.¹¹

When the Dutch arrived at the Cape the different Hottentot tribes alone numbered many thousands. Like the Bushmen, the Hottentots differ in appearance from all other Africans, and they belong to an extremely ancient type. They were, however, a whole age in advance of the Bushmen; for they were able to use copper.¹² The Hottentots were at the second stage of man's development. They were herdsmen. The Hottentots had learnt how to obtain such metals as copper and iron, and could work these metals. However, they were too lazy to make much use of their discovery.¹³ (In South Africa it was found impossible to teach the Hottentots to do the work of farm labourers.¹⁴) The Hottentots are a race superior to and gentler than the Bushmen. They have none of that reckless bravery which led the latter to fling their lives away in desperate resistance rather than yield to the white man's power, and so they are found in large numbers in South Africa today. They have become so mixed with the other tribes that it is hard to say who are the descendants of the real Hottentots. In their habits the Hottentots were very dirty. Lazy and light of heart, their chief amusements were eating, sleeping, and dancing. They wore dresses of skins, and knew how to make earthenware, but were too lazy to do anything more than they could help.¹⁵

The native trouble, that dark cloud which has so often dimmed the fair prospects of South Africa, dates, as we have seen, from a time long before the arrival of van Riebeeck. The Dutch settlers of 1652 soon came into conflict with the Hottentots. From this time forward, continual strife ensued between the settlers and the savages, till at last, in 1659, the thieves grew so daring that armed parties were sent against them.¹⁶ A trade was carried on in cattle with the Hottentots who, from time to time, visited the village, but the country was still unknown, and the white man took his life in his hands who strayed a league from the tiny cluster of houses huddled together under the shadow of Table Mountain.¹⁷

Up to 1672 the land belonging to the Company was simply that of which they had possession, and no attempt had been made to secure any further territory. In 1672, however, an agreement was made between Commissioner van Overbeek, one of the company's superior officers, who touched at the Cape that year on his way to Holland, and Schacher, chief of the Hottentot tribes of the Cape Peninsula. By this treaty the whole Cape District, together with Table Bay, Saldanha Bay, and the Houts Bay, was to be made over to the company for a sum equal to 800 pounds. But the barbarians had no idea of the value of money, and went away satisfied with goods from the company's stores at Goede Hoop

¹¹ Ziervogel (n.d.:3).

¹² Ziervogel (n.d.:3).

¹³ Dodd and Cordingley (n.d.:11-16).

¹⁴ Hartill (1920:44).

¹⁵ Sidwell (1915:74).

¹⁶ Sidwell (1915: 14).

worth something less than three pounds of English money. A few days after this a similar bargain was made with another Hottentot clan, by which the Europeans obtained Hottentots Holland and False Bay, at the nominal price of 800 pounds. In this case, goods worth nearly seven pounds sterling were exchanged.¹⁸

The natives gave the colonists much trouble at this time. The Europeans kept advancing further and further into the country on their excursions as the game which they sought gradually withdrew before them. These advances of the settlers alarmed the Hottentots, who began to resent, in their own savage way, what they considered a trespassing on their rights.¹⁹ They did not want to work for Van Riebeeck's men, and their thieving ways caused lots of trouble.²⁰ In the Cape Town Museum there is a very interesting anthropological collection, consisting of life-size casts of Bushmen and Hottentots. The casts were made from living models, and their interest lies in the fact that these races are now practically extinct.²¹

CONSTRUCTION TWO²²

Richard Elphick, the author of *Kraal and Castle*, wrote: "In 18th century England's most celebrated insults, Lord Chesterfield declared Dr Samuel Johnson to be no more than a 'respectable Hottentot'" and : "Lord Salisbury, 19th century British prime minister, created an uproar among Irishmen and sensitive Englishmen when he equated Irish and Hottentot capacities for Home Rule."

In twentieth century Canada, Slim Evans, leader of the On to Ottawa Trek, declared Prime Minister Bennet "unfit to run a Hottentot village" let alone this vast dominion of North America.

Both "Hottentot" and "Trek" are words which have their origins in South Africa. The former has since been replaced by "Coloured" and "mixed race" and the latter has been taken into outer space, conquering, in the words of Ronald Reagan, new frontiers.

The reason for this European familiarity with the South African people is quite simple. During the 16th and 17th centuries, European plundering was primarily aimed at the Americas and the Far East. Thus, to or from the East, enough replenishment could be found at the Cape of Good Hope to make further stops on the African coast almost unnecessary.

17 Sidwell (1915:17).

18 Sidwell (1915:20).

19 Sidwell (1915:22).

20 Dodd and Cordingley (n.d.:11-16).

21 Ziervogel (n.d.:20).

22 Edited from Crail (1986).

The Dutch, who first started settling here permanently in 1652, were in the employ of the Dutch East India Company. The first full-time administrator of the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck, was transferred to another Dutch possession after he was found guilty of theft. That is, in addition to stealing stock for the Company, he stole some for himself. Subsequent administrators didn't behave any better, but never allowed themselves to be caught.

As for the bosses in Holland, they were perfectly happy as long as the replenishment station showed increased annual profits. Their mission was not to proselytize; they were out to make money at the least expense to themselves. When enough stock had been pillaged for breeding and trading, the local tribes became redundant in the Company's scheme of things.

The Dutch couldn't very well employ them to look after the animals that were essentially the tribesmen's own. Instead free burghers (citizens) were brought from Holland, along with rebels from the Dutch East Indies (as Indonesia was then called in Europe), to mind the herds. This left the Gorachouqua, Goringhaiqua and Cochoqua tribes (or what was left of them) absolute beggars, living on the fringes of a land formerly their own.

Thus without examining the causes of the wretchedness of this society, learned scholars in Vienna, Berlin and London wrote volumes of literature on the degeneracy of a people who, for Europe, had come to represent Africa south of the Sahara. To this day the myth is perpetuated in South Africa's schools that the history of the Khoi-Khoi is so permeated with barbarism and degeneracy that it is best for them to forget their past and concentrate on the future, where at some point, "Coloureds" will be equal to Whites. If not on earth, then through sufficient piety we'll be able to work our way into heaven to be equal not only with Whites but with all angels.

The time has come for "Coloureds" to take stock of themselves and view their position entirely within a Southern African context. As part of the oppressed we have only been given third-rate status as compared to the majority of Blacks who occupy a fourth-rate position. Anachronistic as this may sound now, there can be no greater or dignified name to call ourselves by than the name our ancestors were known by to themselves and others: as the "People of People," that is, as Khoi-Khoi. All other names, whether "Hottentot", "Coloured" or "mixed race", were forced upon us.

State History/People's History

The two preceding versions of herder history demonstrate precisely one of the ways in which struggles over "the past" have been played out in South Africa. Before these two illustrative texts can be understood, they need to be contextualised in terms of different types of histories. For convenience, history can be divided into four areas, namely:

1. state history
2. public history
3. popular history
4. people's history.

The precise definitions of these terms, and the kind of information, interpretation and processes presented in each, differ from context to context.²³ While the above categories exist in most contexts, the interplay between categories differs. What constitutes each and how these categories are formulated relative to each other is context-specific. There is thus a confusion over the use of the different terms and their exact referents, a confusion which is also evident in South Africa. For this reason I define what I mean by each term.

State History is that history presented and controlled by the state. While the content and interpretations will differ from state to state, South African State History validates the position of the dominant class. This history is most evidently presented in formal education, in state-controlled history textbooks.

Public History is that history presented in the public media - on television, in newspapers, on video and in museums, and includes the type of histories developed within the historical preservation societies that exist in some South African centres. As most public media in South Africa are directly state controlled, public history and state history are closely related, reflecting the same validations of the position of the dominant class through content and interpretation.

Popular History is that history that "brings to light" processes in the past that are traditionally excluded by dominant or elitist history. This would include histories of the working class, of women, of colonised and oppressed nations and so on. This is often referred to as "history from below". Popular versions of the past focus on history from a different angle (eg. from the viewpoint of the working class instead of the ruling class, or of women instead of men). However, these histories are nevertheless produced and

²³ See for example Benson *et al* (1986) and Callinicos (1986).

presented by academic historians and intellectuals through processes that replicate the traditional academic methods of producing knowledge about the past.

People's History is defined by the the different processes through which knowledge about the past is produced. People's History does not only mean history *about* the people - it also means history *by* the people and history *for* the people. The principle behind People's History is an empowering of communities so that they develop the ability to produce knowledge and establish for themselves a popular memory.

The aim is for communities to develop further the capacity to locate themselves historically beyond the bounds of dominant histories - in order to locate themselves historically in society, and locate their societies historically. If history is seen to be about the particular "contours and nature of the relationship between conflicting social groups"(Bloch 1987:10), and this takes the form of class, gender and racial oppression as much anywhere else in the world as in South Africa, the practise of People's History would be towards the liberation of the oppressed in order that they may develop their own insights into past processes, unbounded by dominant interpretations.

Construction One, a compilation of comments from various sources, exemplifies what can be regarded as traditional South African state history. A quick reading of eight or nine popular texts from the first half of the 20th century reveals that the same textualised drama has played itself out in mundane but self-perpetuating repetition. These texts set the scene, they describe the action and they qualify the drama in terms of the linearity that typifies the discipline of history. This linearity employs a language of time as "progress" or "evolution", with "other cultures" being located in a different subordinate time. The ideas expressed in such histories have been informed by a well-established colonial mind-set. In the terms set out above, *Construction One* can also be regarded as public history in that it is presented in the public media and popular literature.

Construction Two is an example of the kinds of alternatives to state history that are offered. This version demonstrates the way in which the "Khoi" have been popularised as fighting the first wars of resistance, being the first political prisoners on Robben Island, as having made enormous contributions to various languages in South Africa, and as such, as deserving of a better place than that to which they have been relegated in South African state histories.²⁴ This text can be seen as an example of what a People's History could look like in that it is direct opposition to State History. However, the process by which this particular text was produced would probably

²⁴ See Upbeat Magazine (1984, numbers 6 and 7).

relegate it to the category of popular history in that it presents an alternative version but does not represent an alternative process.

While People's History is always popular history, the reverse is not necessarily true, in that it is easy enough to make academically researched knowledge accessible and popular, without reference to the people about whom the work is written, thereby maintaining the status quo of knowledge production. Many popular histories can serve an empowering function simply in that they contain perspectives alternative to the dominant histories. However, Popular History can exclude, by the nature of its academic production, the potential for developing community participation in the production of this knowledge. This participation should be inherent in the practice of People's History. In my view, People's History, apart from being a product, is a conscious process.

There are thus complexities in the overlaps between categories, but State History and People's History could be regarded as opposites in the South African context. State History is about oppression and People's History is about resistance, and these two types of history can be seen as oppositional points of oppression and resistance. In this framework, *Construction One* and *Two* stand in opposition to one another.

It should be noted though, that in my argument, these texts are both *constructions*. They are textual constructions, and neither is necessarily the "truth". Foucault (1972) offers a perspective on this in his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. He argues that the traditional task of history has been to make the documents speak, to try to reconstitute, on the basis of what the documents say (and sometimes merely hint at), the past from which they emanate. The task of new history is to organise the document, to work on the document from within, to develop the document, so that the document becomes the history, and is acknowledged as such, rather than historians writing a history "based" on the documents. Instead of history being constituted by an idea of a collective consciousness that can be gleaned from the documents (if only the historian asks the right questions), history can in this light be seen as one way in which a society recognises and develops a mass of documentation with which it is inextricably bound. Foucault (1972) talks of the document now becoming the monument, instead of the monument being turned into a document. It is documents that we use - compare, order, interpret and judge.

Attention has been given in recent years to the obvious distortions in South African school textbooks.²⁵ Changes have been made to school textbook presentations of herder history, but while the adjectives may have changed, the form of description has

²⁵ See for example Cornevin (1980), Stewart and Mazel (1986), Smith (1983).

not. This is the standard "manners-and-customs" format,²⁶ written with the linearity of disciplined History. For example, in what would be described as one of the more enlightened textbooks on the South African market,²⁷ the "San", the "Khoi-khoi" and the "Bantu-speaking Black people" are still presented together in one chapter, headed "The first people to live in my district". This chapter is sandwiched between a chapter on "People who help others in my district" and a chapter on colonial settler figures entitled "People who became important in the Cape and South Africa" - essentially still as an incident in white history. The fact that this is a Standard Two textbook makes it all the more problematic in that it is the minds of nine- and ten-year old children that are being shaped by this presentation.

The Standard Three textbook in the same series²⁸ (aimed at ten- and eleven-year old children) offers "An introduction to the coming of Jan van Riebeeck to the Cape" in which the "People of Southern Africa and their occupations" are outlined. This section sets out, in more liberal terminology, a similar type of linear history as exemplified in *Construction One* above.

It has often been said that colonial histories have been used to crush indigenous culture.²⁹ But the limitations of these histories are acutely felt at times of great historical stress and change, as the "dominant historical discourse is unable to provide answers to questions which are suddenly generalised as part of a critical and creative upsurge on the part of the active mass" (Bloch, 1987:1).

Struggles around what is regarded as legitimate history are constantly evident, particularly in countries where the effects of colonial oppression are still being felt. People are fighting for the right to protest dominant histories, and for the right to speak with their own voices about their past. In the words of Samora Machel:

"Only by freely re-establishing its links with the past, recognising itself with pride in its present and discovering work as the liberating act of its own humanity does the People succeed in breaking definitively with the society of exploitation."³⁰

The call for "People's History" in South Africa peaked in the education struggles of 1985.³¹ One of the academic responses was to set up the People's History Project based at the University of the Western Cape. This project has as its aim the "recovery of neglected aspects of our past",³² and the encouragement of students, workers and communities in the writing of their own histories. The aim of people's history is radical in these senses. Taking into account that "popular voice" is not necessarily progressive,

²⁶ See Pratt (1986), Coetzee (1988).

²⁷ Sieborger *et al* (1984).

²⁸ Fleurs *et al* (1983).

²⁹ See for example Gray (n.d.), NECC (1987).

³⁰ Quoted in Gray (n.d.:3).

³¹ See for discussion Van den Heever (1987).

³² UWC (n.d.:backcover).

the aim of People's History is to empower communities, whatever their base (geographical/ workplace/ gender), to establish their own sense of self, to raise their consciousness to "community consciousness", a basis from which they can potentially engage more effectively in the struggles to transform their environment, and to show that possibilities for change are a norm of society.

The process of producing a People's History ideally enables the development of a sense of commitment whereby communities gain an understanding of themselves as bearers of specific traditions, thus carrying historical responsibility. There are also potentially beneficial spin-off effects in the process of raising a progressive historical consciousness. Benefits would include the challenging of established methodologies of education (in which the teacher has the monopoly on skills and knowledge), and the enhancement of understanding of participants in such processes that the knowledge that they develop is not theirs only, but rather needs to be shared in a contribution to making new histories. The potential also exists to teach "that it is the role of ordinary people in the past that makes it possible to rediscover history as a popular history" (Bloch, 1987:10).

It needs to be understood that popularising history is not just a matter of simplifying issues, or of writing in a more straightforward language.³³ The South African Council for Higher Education (SACHED), an alternative progressive education organisation that serves a range of education service functions, argues that with popular writing in South Africa the task is to translate from an academic discipline to another discipline - that of second language popular writing.³⁴ In order to write effectively and accessibly, proper training is required, which raises the issue of the recognition by universities of the extension work done by academics as on a par with traditional academic publication.³⁵

Writing accessible material is a time-consuming task which requires commitment and dedication. It also raises the problem of whether academic researchers are in fact the best people to be attempting to popularise their own research. At the very least, academics should be participating in the process of People's History, whether they are actually writing accessible materials or not. The principle of popularising history should not just embody the concept of making the knowledge accessible, but should make the idea of history, the past, the area of knowledge and the process of the production of historical knowledge, accessible.

Benson *et al*(1986), while acknowledging that it is difficult to define, say that People's History refers to efforts to encourage a progressive, accessible, and frequently

³³ Bloch (1987), Callinicos (1986).

³⁴ Quoted in Callinicos (1986:31).

³⁵ See Chapter Two.

oppositional historical vision in a variety of community and organisational contexts. I quote at length their comments on People's History:

"Convinced that the discovery and knowledge of one's own history can be personally empowering and a catalyst for social movements, the practitioners of people's history have often experimented with new media and explored topics ignored by mainstream academic historians. In addition, some people's historians have emphasized the process as well as the content of history, striving to make it a partnership between those with historical expertise and those with historical experience" (Benson *et al*, 1986:xviii).

It is to "people's historians" that these authors give the credit for American history no longer being the preserve of rich, powerful white men.

Benson *et al* (1986) sound a warning, though, from the American experience. The growth of a more conservative political climate (heralded by the election of Ronald Reagan to the United States' Presidency) has meant the resurgence of elitism, racism, sexism, and homophobia, both in the social sphere and in the writing of history. The effects of this on a more inclusive vision of history, through the reduction of funding for progressive history projects, has caused the termination of some of these projects, leading to a diminished influence on other forms of public history. They also outline similar problems to those raised in CER discussions, particularly the problems that arise from the weighting of skills and knowledge in favour of experts and professionals - ie. that most projects have effectively operated from the top down, rather than giving form to "history from below". This has meant that People's History projects have not always embodied the democratic values that they have espoused (Benson *et al*, 1986).

There have also been indications of a reluctance on the part of the "professionals" to engage in the task of democratising not just the historical record, but the historical work as well. Benson *et al* (1986) make a final point that is entirely applicable to the South African context:

"Whether a non-hierarchical, democratic, and community-based historical practice can be merged with a theoretical understanding of class, racial and sexual oppression depends only in part on the energy and vision of those committed to developing a people's history ...As in the past, both the prospects and the potential of the people's history movement are closely tied to broader movements for social change" (1986:xxiii).

In South Africa, where communities are continually engaged in day-to-day struggles, an approach that is genuinely democratic needs to take as its starting point the needs of the community in question, whose changing priorities provide additional challenges to the task of developing People's History.

Specific sites of struggle

"The past" needs to be considered as a site of struggle because history is an area that, quite simply, is struggled around. In most countries of the modern world, there are continuous struggles around interpretations of the past, as well as struggles to bring to light histories that have traditionally been unacknowledged, or simply regarded as too insignificant to be of interest or value.

Great Zimbabwe is probably the best known Southern African example of a literal site around which meaning has been negotiated³⁶ since the "discovery" of the structures by early European travellers into the interior of Southern Africa.³⁷

Great Zimbabwe, the largest stone-walled site in south-east Africa, forms part of a pattern of more than fifty *madzimbawhe*.³⁸ Each of these fifty sites is thought to belong to one of about ten different territories, with each *dzimbahwe* being a regional centre. The walled enclosures at each site would have served to separate the *dzimbahwe*-dwelling elite from the general population. As such, this complex of *madzimbahwe* represents an extensive, powerful, socially-stratified state based on control of trade networks in this part of Africa. Great Zimbabwe was, between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, the centre of this state.³⁹ There is no question that these sites are of African origin, but because Great Zimbabwe was clearly the largest city in black Africa in its time,⁴⁰ and represents advanced masonry, architecture and social and administrative skills, it was understood by Europeans to be of foreign origin.

"The exponents ofthe "ancient" theory, believe variously, that Great Zimbabwe was built in King Solomon's time, perhaps by the Queen of Sheba. Others believe that Zimbabwe is not quite so ancient, but was built by the Himyarites of Southern Arabia. Then others...believe that Zimbabwe was built by the Phoenicians...The modern school...have all come to the conclusion that Zimbabwe was built by the Bantu... We submit unhesitatingly that the only possible builders were the refugee Arabs..." (Mullan, J.E.1969:4-5)

Dave Collett, currently the archaeologist at Great Zimbabwe, says that there is still so little known about the Great Zimbabwe and surrounding settlement, because so much research energy has been used in the debates around *Who Built Zimbabwe?* In Collett's opinion, the "negotiation of meaning" at Great Zimbabwe is still continuing (Collett, 1989).⁴¹ This seems to be borne out by recent debates about Zimbabwe, particularly between Peter Garlake⁴² and Ken Mufuka.⁴³ The tension around interpretation seem to

36 For discussion on Great Zimbabwe, see Hall (1987, 1990b) and Garlake (1982a, 1982b).

37 "The first white man known to have seen the ruins was Adam Render a German hunter who had spent some time in America, and had become a citizen of the U.S.A. He first reached Zimbabwe during 1868..." (Cooke, (ed.) 1971:54).

38 This is the plural of *dzimbahwe*, the term used for the distinctive stone-walled towns of south-east Africa. *Dzimbahwe* is the Shona term for "residence of a chief" (Hall, 1987:92).

39 Hall (1987); Garlake (1982a).

40 Garlake (1982c).

41 Interview - see Appendix B.

42 Garlake (1982a).

43 Mufuka (1983).

have arisen because of Mufuka's belief in "blacks interpreting what is black", and Garlake's criticism that Mufuka's work can be described as "atavistic fantasy".⁴⁴

Colonial Great Zimbabwe was a myth, a legend, a mystery. Colonial historical discourse could only present the site in this way - "white rule was justified by the belief that blacks were not capable of governing themselves without white guidance. There was no room for evidence that the Bantu-speaking tribes had ever shown the technical and organizational skills to create such a state as Zimbabwe" (Frederickse, 1982:10). In 1970 the Rhodesian Front regime instructed that no official publications may state unequivocally that Great Zimbabwe was an African creation,⁴⁵ and archaeologist Paul Sinclair was threatened with the loss of his job if he publicly stated that blacks built Zimbabwe.⁴⁶

"If we accept that blacks could do something like that then, we must give them majority rule now" (Frederickse, 1982:12).

WHAT IS ZIMBABWE?

- a) An interesting complex of ruins, of uncertain origin, near Fort Victoria?
- b) The black nationalist and Communist name for Rhodesia, designed to denigrate Cecil John Rhodes and the white founders of the country?
- c) Old ruins which serve no useful purpose, the symbol of which is a queer bird which does nothing by squat, gazing blankly into the distance, as it slowly decays?
- d) The future name for Rhodesia? (Frederickse, 1982:12)

Names symbolise and encapsulate the traditions that people want to believe in. The struggle over the past includes the struggle over naming.⁴⁷ To name is to define, and in Zimbabwe this has been played out in the naming of monuments, cities, and the name of the country: Zimbabwe Ruins or Great Zimbabwe? Fort Victoria or Masvingo? Rhodesia or Zimbabwe?

Liberated Great Zimbabwe is the national symbol of Zimbabwe, regarded as the cornerstone of Zimbabwean culture, that was "taken away from us with our country by the colonialists".⁴⁸ Through re-naming, re-presentation, this symbol has been re-covered from its immersion in colonial discourse.

"The Europeans said that they discovered the ruins, that it wasn't African people who built them. But our old grannies, they're the ones who know better. I just didn't believe all the things I was taught in school." (Winnie Paradza, 1982)⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Garlake (1984:121-123).

⁴⁵ Garlake (1982a).

⁴⁶ Frederickse (1982:11).

⁴⁷ See Chapters Five and Six on the power of naming.

⁴⁸ Dr. the Hon Comrade H.S.M. Ushewokunze in Garlake (1982a:5).

⁴⁹ Quoted in Frederickse (1982:13).

Struggles around the past have not just been the struggles of communities fighting for the right to write. The struggles have taken the form of very practical organisation around reclaiming control over everything that is "the past". Most important in my view are those battles that are being fought to regain control of the resources that for archaeologists are "artefacts" and objects of study, but for the oppressed communities engaged in these struggles, are symbols of their heritage. This essentially embodies resistance to colonialism and imperialism politically, economically and socially, but particularly to the colonialism of scientific research.

In Australia and North America this struggle has been waged for many years, and has met with varying degrees of success.

The communities best known presently to archaeologists, for their resistance to the continued exploitation of their cultural resources by western academics doing "research", are the American Indian people and the Australian Aborigines. At the same time, many countries are tightening up controls on what they regard as cultural exploitation, that has often in their view led to the destruction of heritage rather than its preservation.⁵⁰

"The evidence about past Aboriginal occupation which they [sites] provide has a more direct effect on Aborigines than on any other group in the community and whoever controls research into such sites controls, to some extent, the Aboriginal past" (Sullivan, 1985:139).

The fact that pre-colonial Aboriginal sites are of great significance not only to archaeologists but also to Aboriginal Australians appears to have surprised some researchers, who have met Aboriginal claims for cultural continuity with disbelief.⁵¹ While local history societies, museums and legislative measures have focused activity on the preservation of sites relating to European settlement, little attention has been paid to the preservation of Aboriginal heritage. Lack of interest and lack of funding (leading to lack of preservation and presentation) have been the fate of Aboriginal sites in relation to academic and popular history in Australia. Archaeologists engaged in pre-colonial research have benefited from this lack of interest, as protective legislation for Aboriginal sites has been written "more or less for their benefit" (Sullivan, 1985:146). The main value of these sites has been perceived in terms of the viewpoint of historians and archaeologists ie.in terms of their research value.

Problems relating to the use of the heritage of indigenous groups for academic research are being experienced world-wide, where a dominant culture, through ethnocentric interpretations of the evidence, often unconsciously harms or insults the studied group.⁵²

⁵⁰ For discussion on the restitution of cultural property, see McBryde (ed) (1985).

⁵¹ See Sullivan (1985); White and O'Connell (1982).

⁵² See McBryde (ed) (1985); Sullivan (1985); White and O'Connell (1982); Trigger (1980); Martin (1986).

Resistance to the monopoly that academics have on interpretations of "the past" is exemplified in the following statement:

"...we, the Aboriginal people have been the sources for these academics in the first place. We, the Aborigines, are the experts and authorities on Aborigines. We can speak for ourselves and we do not need white experts to do it" (Charles Perkins, 1982).⁵³

In the United States forms of community militancy have been evident since the late 1960's, heralding the challenges to the approach of Anthropologists and Archaeologists toward all aspects of Indian culture. Actual disruptions of excavations and museum sit-ins have occurred in the United States. Watson *et al* (n.d.:2) record that archaeologists have responded to this militancy in the past by claiming that Indians are "just seeking publicity". These authors see the conflict in terms of different perceptions of time and law, where the excavation and study of ancient burial sites is perceived by Indians as a desecration of the past, and a disruption and exploitation of the present.

Archaeologists have variously interpreted the growing militancy of oppressed communities around the issue of controlling resources of the past as "political" rather than as "spiritual". This perception has sometimes been used by archaeologists to delegitimize the rights claims of groups such as native Americans. Fagan (1989:446) says that Archaeology was a simpler discipline 30 years ago. This is probable in that it would not have occurred to archaeologists at that time that, in the course of "scientific enquiry", there would be any need to consult with communities about the removal of cultural property. Instead of acknowledging the need to democratise the research process, it has often been easier to dismiss the claims as "politically motivated". Now archaeologists are perforce learning that we are no longer the principal experts on the pasts of the people we have been studying.

Watson *et al* (n.d.) attempt to understand the differences in world view that they believe lie at the base of the conflict. An alternative explanation of this conflict is that the type of western tolerance for intellectual alternatives is "incomprehensible" to many non-westerners, who have found the transition to a position of awareness of alternative world views "even more traumatic and sudden" than it has been to "our own society" (Fagan, 1989:448). In this view it is this "traumatic transition" that accounts for the emerging reaction against archaeological explanations of the prehistoric past. This conflict in the USA has moved beyond the stage of having to acknowledge differences in perceptions of "the past", to the stage where archaeologists are trying to *understand* the differences in world view, in order better to understand the route to resolution. The

⁵³ Quoted in White and O'Connell (1982:233).

70's and 80's in the United States have seen a shift in attitude amongst Indian communities from militancy to discussion, giving archaeologists the opportunity to understand perceptions of the past amongst Indian communities.

Given the rise in militancy around the past in South Africa, archaeologists should be learning from struggles elsewhere around cultural property. The warnings have been sounding in South Africa in relation to archaeological activity since at least 1981. In this year, John Parkington cautioned that perhaps we (South African archaeologists) "should learn from the difficulties which have arisen between aboriginal Americans and modern archaeologists over the excavation of prehistoric sites, and prepare to avoid any such confrontation here in southern Africa. This can only be done by archaeologists, professional or otherwise, becoming sensitised to the feelings of surviving indigenous peoples - preferably by the two groups being the same people."⁵⁴

Producers versus the people

Historians and writers of the past would be too simplistically represented as a hegemonic bloc. However, in terms of the western traditions of linear history, dominated by the stories of white men, academic researchers do in many senses represent a bloc, against which are counterposed those communities struggling to gain control of their heritage. Internationally, academics involved in writing history, or in producing the past in any form, have been debating these issues with a degree of commitment. A 1985 Royal Anthropological Institute seminar illustrates this point.⁵⁵ Topics raised at this seminar were, for example, explorations of how nations appropriate their own and other people's pasts, how these representations are challenged by alternative groups, and how the products of the producing disciplines are differently appropriated by different groups. Discussion focused on the past as the generator of a set of changing ideologies of nationalism, the problems that local groups have of identifying with academically-created symbols of the past, and the use and suppression of archaeology in specific strategies of legitimation. Important in these discussions were the issues of the autonomy of the academic disciplines to construct history, and the diversity of strategies by which history is appropriable. Miller and Rowlands (1985:24) acknowledge that all the above represent a "considerable challenge to the normally somewhat narrower foci of academic research".

Within the South African "bloc" of historians there exist numerous traditions which have appropriated and used the past in particular ways:

⁵⁴ Parkington (1981:94).

⁵⁵ Miller and Rowlands (1985).

"Early colonial settlers validated appropriation of the land through a reading of history: Afrikaner nationalist historians have too long justified segregation through the creation of ethnic histories: Liberal historians have obscured the relationship between capital accumulation and segregationist histories and African nationalist historians have begun to write histories that authenticate the nation" (Hall, 1990b:1).

There also exist now established traditions within the writing of history that in content abandon elitism, in a move away from the "Grand People and Places" approach that has characterised the long tradition of written history.⁵⁶ As outlined previously, the changes in content can have important effects in terms of empowering communities. But I have argued that more than a change of content is required. As has been demonstrated in the United States and Australia, the efforts on the part of archaeologists to "produce history from below", to "cast bright beams of light on the daily lives ... of the common people" (Fagan, 1989:446) have been rejected as neo-colonial appropriations of the cultural heritage of oppressed communities. As archaeologists and as academic researchers - as producers of "the past" - we thus have a responsibility to address issues around the manner in which we produce histories. As it has become clear that archaeologists in South Africa and elsewhere can no longer escape into academic "neutrality", it would seem necessary to engage more overtly in the struggles around the past, in order to contribute more consciously to one or other kind of history. In my view, university-based archaeologists need to be examining seriously ways of making our research more accessible - not just in content, but also in process. In this light, what then are the possibilities for a People's Archaeology?

⁵⁶ See for example Callinicos (1981), Callinicos (1987).

CHAPTER FOUR

ARCHAEOLOGISTS AS PRODUCERS OF THE PAST

"We have become blind to the fact that we are writing." (Ian Hodder 1989:271)

"Excavation is an active production of material remains." (Christopher Tilley 1989: 278)

"Those who accredit themselves by their own internal rules as professionals decide on a past that the public supposedly should consume." (Christopher Tilley 1989: 279)

Initially, my research was directed towards the analysis of "popularised" versions of herder histories. Through the process of research I have moved rather towards examining the manner in which archaeological research becomes "popular". The main reason for this is that I steadily became more interested in the power wielded by academics. As Muller and Cloete (1986:10) have pointed out:

"...academics, in complete control over the generation, validation and reproduction of their practise, are a far more powerful group in society than they are commonly willing to admit."

This power is central to struggles around the production and presentation of "the past". The political space in liberal universities has allowed progressive academics to participate overtly in the production of people's histories. But as yet, although these issues have been tentatively addressed internationally, there exists no practise in South Africa of a People's Archaeology.

In the light of the debates outlined in the Chapters Two and Three I thus argue that progressive archaeologists, subjective in their work, have a commitment to taking responsibility for the process of producing *and* presenting knowledge. The problematic can be outlined in terms of three questions:

- who are archaeologists producing information for?
- how is this knowledge being produced?
- how and where is this knowledge made accessible to the public, if at all?

These questions highlight issues that are only beginning to be addressed both internationally and in South Africa.

Archaeologists in other countries have been confronted more directly with issues of "Peoples' History" - where communities have struggled to empower themselves towards control over a heritage about which they feel strongly, over sites and practises which play a central role in their lives.

I posit that there are various reasons why, internationally, archaeologists have not responded particularly positively to such struggles, and why in South Africa the struggles around history have not affected the way in which archaeologists produce pasts in practise:

1. the traditional split between Archaeology and History,¹ resulting in archaeology seldom being perceived as a method for producing "history";
2. the more "scientific" orientation of Archaeology as opposed to the more "humanist" History, which has allowed the remove of Archaeology into "objective and neutral scientificity", with the influence of the positivist New Archaeology since the 1960's being important in this regard;²
3. an often deep concern with the bias in state-dominated presentations of history, but an acceptance as correct of the bourgeois process by which "legitimate knowledge" is produced, by authoritative university- and museum-based researchers;
4. the ease with which such problems are perpetuated, given the minimal influence of these debates on the practice of archaeology - particularly in terms of the relationship between archaeologists and the public, which has remained as that between producers of knowledge and consumers of knowledge.

There is no doubt that archaeologists are prime producers of the past in South Africa,³ and the role of archaeological research has been important in writing new histories for South Africa. However, a quick review of the textbooks⁴ still demonstrates the dearth of information on archaeology, and it is only recently that any rewriting based on archaeological research has entered textbooks. Likewise with museums,⁵ archaeological information has not yet made a major impact on displays of indigenous people, who are generally displayed as anthropological entities, rather than as groups with long histories.

There are a number of levels at which this lack of available information can be, and has been, taken up amongst archaeologists internationally. These include popular writing, contact with mass media and the public debunking of myths. Public archaeology, particularly in the United States of America, has been developed as a method of keeping the public informed about archaeological research. Because archaeology has always been, on the research side, so removed from the public, and on the public side romanticised beyond Indiana Jones, there is, particularly in South Africa, little understanding of the role that archaeology, as a method toward writing the past, *could*

1 Binford (1968), Deetz (n.d.), Fish (1978), Russel (1978).

2 For a discussion of New Archaeology, see Walker (1978).

3 It is important to note that all archaeologists practising in South Africa have, till recently, been white; and, whether white or black, are all in some or other way products of Apartheid.

4 See Stewart and Mazel (1986).

play. Public perceptions of archaeology are extremely varied, from those who understand it not at all, to those who eagerly volunteer their services to assist on sites. In 1987, 30% of archaeology students (first year to Honours level) at the University of Cape Town believed that archaeology is too removed, complicated or boring to be taught at primary and secondary schools,⁶ indicating that even amongst those people who have chosen to study Archaeology, there exists a fair percentage who see Archaeology as having little relevance to the public in terms of its relationship with History.

There have been attempts to popularise archaeology in South Africa. Recent efforts are exemplified by the work of Revil Mason,⁷ Anthony Humphreys,⁸ Candy Malherbe and Martin Hall,⁹ by the many books available on Southern African rock art,¹⁰ and by the occasions on which archaeologists have given public talks - to societies, to high schools, to city councils and other organisations. Apart from the commitment to inform the public of archaeological findings, it is also seen as essential, within the framework of "popularising" Archaeology, to educate the public about the sensitivity of sites, of remnants from the past as a non-renewable resource.

Public statements by archaeologists and letters to editors of magazines and newspapers have also been used in attempts to expose some of the blatant errors and traditional myths in journalistic reporting of histories. These efforts are exemplified in communications between the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town on the one hand, and on the other hand firstly, Time Magazine and secondly, ex-State President P.W. Botha.¹¹

If categories similar to those used in Chapter Three, for different types of histories, were adopted for different types of archaeologies, these efforts would fall within the genre of Popular Archaeology. It should be clear why I argue that these attempts serve as a good grounding from which to move forward, but are limited in their goal - the aim has been to educate the public about archaeology, but not really to involve the public in the process of developing this knowledge. Given these efforts to popularise archaeology, archaeologists nevertheless remain the producers and the public remain consumers.

⁵ See Wright and Mazel (1987).

⁶ This attitude, amongst others, was reflected in a survey of archaeology students' opinions which I conducted at the University of Cape Town in October 1987. The particular question referred to here was phrased as follows:
Do you think that archaeology should be taught in schools? Explain your answer.

See also Thackeray and Thackeray (1986) for a reflection of the levels of knowledge amongst South African archaeology students.

⁷ Mason (1987).

⁸ Humphreys (1986).

⁹ Malherbe and Hall (1989).

¹⁰ See for example Lewis-Williams (1981), Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989), Willcox (1984).

¹¹ These examples are included in Appendix C, as they are particularly valuable for the responses received by the Department of Archaeology.

A critique of this type of work is not to negate its value - I am beginning to appreciate that without these attempts at what might be termed "public outreach", there would be little hope for developing a People's Archaeology. The public would need firstly, to understand the purpose of archaeology and secondly, to acknowledge its importance, before they could begin to demand access to archaeological knowledge, or participate in the process of developing this knowledge. Thus, attempts to popularise archaeology should be seen as a first stage in developing new and different "relations of production" of archaeological knowledge.

The lack of widespread public outreach on the part of archaeologists has lead invariably to a situation where the most important task for archaeologists would be to persuade the public that archaeology is important. This situation is not limited to South Africa, and concern has been expressed worldwide about the need to inform the public about archaeological research. The "preservationist"¹² approach, as expressed by an American archaeologist, is something like this:

"...unless we get our act together pretty quickly there will be no sites and no need for archaeology and, therefore, of course, no need for archaeologists..." (Davis 1989:451).

Whatever the motivation, though, it is a truism that "the survival of some portion of the evidence of the past depends entirely upon our providing the public with the impression that our first concern is with the resources themselves, the sites and the information they contain, not that we are trying to save our jobs, or save archaeology" (Davis, 1989:454).

While it has been difficult at times to persuade academics that the activity of popularising archaeological research is a valid academic responsibility, the most difficult task will be to develop a People's Archaeology. This term encompasses a process similar to that involved in developing People's History, and establishing practises of People's History and People's Archaeology is not without its problems - not least of which will be determining who "the public"/"the people" are. Simply in terms of locating public interest, "the public" could be broken down into at least five categories - such as:

1. those who consider it a "cultural attainment" to be involved in some or other way with archaeological endeavors;
2. those who might be interested, but have little or no access to archaeology;
3. those who wish to redress historical misrepresentations, imbalances and exclusions;

¹² I use "preservationist" here to mean an approach that while operative within the discourse of "public" archaeology, appears more concerned with preserving Archaeology than having as its aim public education.

4. those disinterested because of the negative or inaccessible presentations of histories;
5. those who are "unreachable" in that they are unlikely to be interested.

A People's Archaeology?

A People's Archaeology would be, in the same way as People's History, an overtly politicised endeavour in that it would be an archaeology that endeavoured to empower communities to understand themselves as bearers of specific historical traditions. However, it would be no more political in effect than traditional bourgeois histories which claim objectivity, neutrality and scientific authority, and have been used to reproduce the past in the present in a manner that attempts to make the conditions of the present appear natural and immutable. Dominant ideas, against which a People's Archaeology would be posed, are perpetuated and sustained by representing as universal that which may be partial; by representing as coherent that which may be in conflict; by representing as eternal that which may be historical; and by representing as natural that which may be cultural (Keene 1986). A People's Archaeology, in opposition to this and in the manner of People's History, would at least attempt to show that the possibilities for change are a societal norm.

The differences between Public Archaeology and a possible People's Archaeology would be similar to those between Popular and People's History. These differences, in archaeological terms, are highlighted by Leone *et al's* (1987) article *Towards a Critical Archaeology*. This article, based on work in Annapolis in Maryland, USA, outlines an approach to Public Archaeology that is a move away from traditional public-outreach efforts. It is different in that these authors advocate a "critical theory" approach as the path to enlightening and educating site visitors. The informing principle in this work is that efforts to inform visitors of a more critical interpretative approach, different from dominant interpretations, will encourage visitors to develop in themselves a critical awareness of what they are learning. However, Leone *et al's* (1987) critics correctly point out that this is no different in practise from a more traditional Archaeology. It is only the interpretation, provided by archaeologists, that is different from dominant versions of the past. It does have to be acknowledged, though, that within such a framework as outlined by these authors, the possibility does exist for the development of a critical approach on the part of visitors (who, within this framework, nevertheless remain *viewers*, rather than active participants in the development of interpretations).

The crucial point is that if People's Archaeology is to be qualitatively different from traditional archaeology, it is required that viewers be transformed into participants in an

interactive effort to exchange skills, knowledge and understanding between community and researcher, between holders of historical expertise and bearers of historical tradition and experience.

A good example of the practise of a People's Archaeology is outlined by Sullivan (1985), in which an Aboriginal community in Australia called in an archaeologist to investigate burials threatened by water erosion. The level, extent and quantity of excavation was negotiated between the archaeologist and the community, and determined through continuous consultation. Carried out with community assistance, the excavation was at every stage the topic of considerable debate within the community and between the community and the archaeologist. On discovering that the burials were part of a major burial ground, it was decided to halt excavation, and efforts were made to stabilise the soil. This negotiated research established for the community the significance of the site in a manner neither authoritarian nor offensive to the community, who participated in debates on meaning. At the same time considerable research information was gained from the site. The site has been preserved for future research, should the community so desire. In this case, the community commissioned research in response to questions posed by the community, rather than the research having as its starting point questions generated by the "internal logic" of scientific work.

This example highlights the main difference between a possible People's Archaeology and the traditional research methods used by archaeologists, which have recently met with such resistance from communities demanding control over their heritage - and that difference lies in *consultation*.

A community has in this instance taken control over what they perceive to be their "cultural property", developing an understanding of the value of archaeological research in providing possible interpretations of sites and processes, and engaging in defining the terms of the research conducted that answers questions posed within the community according to their concerns.

When are you people going to stop studying us?¹³

This question reflects in some degree the extent to which oppressed communities feel the effects of the objectification and "othering" that derives from the practise of archaeology and anthropology. Since about 1983 Australian Aboriginal communities have been calling for the return of their ancestral skeletal material housed in museums and other institutions. Tensions have arisen between Aborigines concerned about the

¹³ Webb reports this response as an indication of the lack of communication between archaeologists and aboriginal people (1987:294).

collection, storage and study of their skeletal remains, and researchers who believed they were giving aboriginal people some of their "lost heritage" back to them (Webb 1987). The attitude of researchers to the "*destruction*" of remains by reburial is a clear indication of the different viewpoints of researcher and local community. Aborigines have set up local heritage groups in many areas, recording both history and sites - an interest that can be seen as a reflection of the "symbolic and emotional" value invested in sites (Sullivan 1985). The research value of sites is not of central concern to local communities. Opposition has thus usually arisen from resentment and frustration over the complete lack of decision-making power and control over areas and issues that are vital to Aboriginal identity.

Co-operative ventures between local aboriginal communities and archaeologists have been successfully conducted in Australia, as outlined above, indicating to those archaeologists who hanker after "the simpler days",¹⁴ and to those with a survivalist bent, that developing democratic research procedures can be the only route forward. The levels of suspicion and distrust of archaeologists by oppressed communities should not be seen as opportunist politicking, but rather as legitimate claims on a past that has for too long been removed from their control.

"Perhaps most important, but least palatable to the researcher, is the necessity to understand differences in cultural attitudes concerning the study of the dead" (Webb, 1987:296).

Authoritative Voice

As academic researchers and writers, archaeologists occupy powerful space. Firstly, the fact that we are university graduates plays a central role in our authoritative power. Secondly, academic discourse, defined as the third person narrative, involving the objective style which is inculcated into students from first-year level, is a discourse of "truth". The third-person narrative in particular effaces the author and achieves a semblance of objectivity, with the resultant appearance that whatever is being argued is the immutable truth for which no alternative exists.

Knowledge produced in the academic world is put across as "truthful knowledge", the only valid form of knowledge. The supposed objectivity, rationality and logic that academic discourse relies on makes the facts/argument apparently unquestionable. The same objective, author-effacing narrative is employed in museums. It is in the convincingness of the text that the authority lies. In academic writing and in museum

¹⁴ See Fagan (1989).

displays the invoking of scientific method (a professional requirement of both) implies its accuracy. If displayed in particular ways, under particular headings, the impression of rigorous research is conveyed, and the text raised to the status of authoritative truth. The use of classification¹⁵ is an also important authoritative technique - "classificatory trope refers to an imagined whole in order to assert that the parts compose it. If the imagination of the whole is achieved, then classification appears to the reader as simply the technical means for marshalling the evidence" (Thornton, 1984:7).¹⁶

Carter (1987) argues that the ordering of objects gives the impression that "events unfold according to a logic of their own" (1987:xviii). Carter goes on to say that "there is no fact or artefact, however confusing, which does not, once located in the framework of European chronology, contribute to the emergence of historical order and narrative clarity ... History continues to unfold upon a stage" (1987:xix). It is in the ordering and classifying of knowledge that the views presented seem to unfold according to the "natural logic". It is what Belsey (1980) calls the "tyranny of lucidity" - ie. the impression that what is being said must be true because it is obvious, clear and familiar.

Arguing that the third-person narrative is one of the main authority-establishing techniques is not to argue that the use of the first person, and making the author and intentions present in the text, is *necessarily* less authoritative. Sangren (1988) offers a useful critique on authority in texts, warning that the use of self-referentiality is often nothing more than another device for establishing authority (1988:407). The possibility certainly exists of replacing hegemonic rhetoric of legitimacy, power and authority with a rhetoric of authority that while different, still invokes authoritative techniques to the same effect.

It would be incorrect to believe that lay people would assume a critical capacity in the face of this power and authority. A People's Archaeology would by nature be dependant upon community participation. Community participation, in turn, is usually dependent upon communities who are demanding access to the skills and knowledge that constitute archaeology, and who are demanding control over the resources that constitute their heritage. Such demands would be dependant on communities that were conscious of, and interested in, archaeology as a method for researching the past, and who perceived themselves as able legitimately to question archaeological interpretations.

Popularised archaeology (ie. that archaeology that has been presented in popular form) has in effect legitimated the traditional practises of archaeology, in that those who have

¹⁵ See Chapter 6 on this.

¹⁶ Museums particularly are based on systems of classification.

responded to popular presentations are supportive, through positive response, of the manner in which archaeological research has been conducted. The purpose of popular archaeology has generally been to educate "the public" towards an understanding of the validity of archaeology as a research method. The purpose has not been to encourage "the public" to question archaeological interpretations.

The South African Archaeological Society exists as a public interest forum, directed specifically towards those with an amateur interest in archaeology. This society, however, is organised largely by archaeologists for an extremely limited middle-class section of the South African public. The society publishes an academic journal¹⁷ and a parallel "popular" newsletter.¹⁸ In effect, this society supports the authoritative voice of academic experts through the publishing strategy of academic journal/popular newsletter, in that the interested public are dealt with, not through providing challenges, but through popularising the authoritative voice.

In this case popularising archaeology serves to perpetuate academic archaeology, as the public do not participate in this society's activities to challenge, but rather to learn from academic authority. This is also reflected in the society's series of annual "open days", events which focus on particular issues through a one-day lecture series. Topics such as *Khoi-Khoi - The Forgotten People of the Cape*¹⁹ have been the focus of these forums, at which speaks the voice of academic authority. The idea of these forums is to "bring to light", to remember, and to popularise the voice that archaeologists have given the "voiceless" of the past (in the above case, the *Khoi-Khoi*).

Speaking for the Voiceless

In terms of academics occupying powerful space, I would like to discuss the notion of *voice*, with reference to historians and archaeologists. As a point of entry, I return to Fagan (1989:446):

"we are priceless, valuable historians, for our finds, our stratigraphic sequences, our interpretations cast bright beams of light not on the daily lives of kings, and great statesmen, but of the common people."

It seems that archaeologists are now becoming (or we certainly advertise ourselves as such) the heroes of all those people who have been silenced by the texts of History. We have finally arrived to give these people a voice - we are the public address system through which the "silent majority" can now speak. It has been said of Historical

¹⁷ *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*.

¹⁸ *The Digging Stick*.

¹⁹ South African Archaeological Society Open Day, Cape Town 1988.

Archaeology, in particular, that this is a truly democratic research discipline, as it allows for the correction of the documentary bias through the excavation of sites of "ordinary people".²⁰ As academics we have taken it upon ourselves, and occupy the space to do this convincingly, to speak for the "voiceless".

There are two points I would like to discuss here with regard to "giving the voiceless a voice" and "remembering the forgotten". Firstly, I understand that the idea of archaeologists speaking for "silenced people" is the same idea as archaeologists and historians getting the documents (texts, artefacts, objects) to speak. There are two problems here:

- is it possible to get the documents to "speak"; is it possible to "reconstruct" voices from the past?
- linked to debates on the relationship between intellectuals and society, can academics actually take up valid speaking positions for "forgotten/silenced" people, as truthful positions?

Carter (1987:347) refers to the notion of recreating the type of voice with which the "forgotten/silenced" would have spoken, as the *imitative fallacy*. In these terms, academic attempts to recreate this voice can only ever result in an imitation, rather than a re-production.

The second point is that the idea of "giving" people a voice is problematic when juxtaposed with the politically more active idea of people gaining the power with which to speak for themselves. This is a potentially idealistic notion, but in practise one which is beginning to win space, even within academic institutions.²¹

With regard to herder history in particular, this idea is problematic, as there exist no active groups today who are struggling to empower themselves with a "herder voice", in order that their own history may be better told. Thus not only are viewers and consumers not being turned into participants, but there is no community with which to work on the issue of developing a herder voice. A similar situation would hold for gatherer-hunter histories in South Africa.

I argue, however, that such circumstances need not necessarily lessen the amount of influence that communities might have in terms of posing the types of questions that would inform academic research. Community-derived questions could still be the starting points used by researchers, and local communities could still participate in the process of research and the construction of meaning. Thus the empowering functions of both People's History and People's Archaeology would still be adequately fulfilled, even

²⁰ Deetz (1977).

²¹ For example, the *People's History Project* at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town.

if "the community" were not defined by descendancy links/claims, and did not necessarily regard the research as contributing toward the writing of their own ancestral history.

Searching for a past

The idea of "own history" is extremely problematic in a country that is seeking national unity now more than ever before. So what kind of "pasts" are we seeking, and how do archaeologists participate in this search?

Tilley (1989) uses the analogy of a cake in describing the current state of archaeological affairs, saying that more and more ingredients for the cake are being sought, but that no-one is actually baking the end product. He says that "how to bake the cake - how to interpret the past" is rarely if ever exemplified, with archaeological literature being dominated by descriptions of sites, and increasing emphasis being placed on accumulating information. Tilley interprets this as the cooks hoping the cake will bake itself.

In my view, though, there is a *massive* canon of interpretations, but the process of interpreting the past may rarely be exemplified, academically or popularly. It thus appears as if few interpretations are being exemplified, as it is very rare, even when interpretations *do* appear in archaeological literature, for them to be presented as *an interpretation*.

Fagan (1989:449) states that "our challenge, then, is to develop new ways of communicating the workings of archaeology to all humankind, ways that bridge cultural chasms, and that make our fascinating discipline even more accessible to the world at large". I argue that the challenge to package archaeology in such a way as to get the "world at large" to acknowledge the importance of archaeological research is indeed a challenge facing archaeologists - but it is not the main challenge. I believe the main challenge to archaeologists is to get the public, or communities, to begin asking the questions. Establishing such a research process would help towards answering the questions that have informed my research: who is permitted to excavate and write, and who is not? For exactly who or what is this excavation and writing being done? In what social and political circumstances does it take place?²²

Archaeologists have been used to occupying spaces in which we can develop the past with impunity, theorising about

²² See also Tilley (1989).

"the diverse human societies of prehistoric times to our hearts content. We could hypothesize without offence that Zimbabwe in Southern Africa was a chiefdom rather than a sophisticated state-organised society. We could excavate an Australian rock shelter or investigate a Southwestern pueblo without worrying about the feelings of those who held it sacred, or whose ancestors had lived there" (Fagan, 1989:447).

As scientific researchers we have, until recently, been able to produce pasts that in a sense produce themselves in the manner in which research questions generate further research questions. As outlined in the previous chapter, this is now being contested, and we are being forced to face our positions as producers,²³ as participants in the active production of authoritative knowledge.

"Third World" societies have been colonised, oppressed, misrepresented, silenced, removed, and exscribed by an alternative world view (ie. "Western" colonialism) for hundreds of years. Such societies are now reacting to what they understand to be the continued appropriation and presentation of their lives, their traditions, their images and symbols, by people other than themselves - by Western academics and intellectuals. In the archaeological context, this has been done in a manner that must smack of blatant exploitation, and wholesale plundering. Perhaps the increasing criticism of archaeological presentations is more a demand for the space to present history and interpretations in terms other than those defined by academics, than an "inability to tolerate alternative world views".²⁴ Davis (1989:445) expresses a similar concern, within the framework of "communication" (but also only with concern for the future of archaeology), saying:

"But the people with whom we have failed to communicate, utterly, miserably, and possibly fatally, are the descendants of those we study. Those of us of European descent, who go to Third World countries, or who study the history of extinct societies, or who study the past of existing cultures other than our own, may well have done untold harm to future archaeologists, and to the possibility of doing archaeology on some categories of sites altogether."

Giving the past meaning

As archaeologists we ostensibly research "the past" - through excavation. We dig. This is what archaeologists *do*.²⁵ How archaeologists research these pasts, and how we present them is certainly not uniform. Increasingly, researchers are developing and using a wider and wider range of theories and methods, and increasingly the question is being asked whether we can actually present "the past" at all.²⁶

²³ See Gero (1985), Gero *et al* (1983), Shanks and Tilley (1987).

²⁴ As argued by Fagan (1989).

²⁵ "It might be said that digging is a pathology of archaeology" (Tilley, 1989:275).

²⁶ See Harlan (1989).

Recent developments in literary criticism and the philosophy of language have "undermined belief in a stable and determinable past, denied the possibility of recovering authorial intention, and challenged the plausibility of historical representation" (Harlan,1989:608). In other words the "knowability" of the past has been brought into serious question. Harlan defines as "radically contextualist" those historians who believe that it is "epistemologically impossible to understand the dead in our terms unless we first understand them in their own" (1989:603). Most historians would regard this type of approach as "reconstruction", their primary responsibility, executed by "listening to the people of the past, by trying to understand them in their own terms, and by telling us 'what they really said'" (1989:602). Harlan argues that our primary responsibility is to people in the present, and proposes as an alternative, an approach that does not "concern itself with textual origins but with the resituating of historical texts" so that texts can point forwards to the "hidden possibilities of the present", rather than backwards to the "putative intentions of their now dead authors" (1989:604). This author calls for a history concerned not with reconstructing the past, but one that is concerned with reading historical texts in new and unexpected contexts, allowing historical texts to "survive their past in order to tell us about the present" (1989:609).

Harlan also makes useful reference (1989:587-589) to the work of Hans George Gadamer, who pointed out the impossibility of historians stripping themselves of their preconceptions and prejudices, as it is exactly these that make understanding possible in the first place.

The recent proliferating concern with the authority of the ethnographic text is linked to the fact that writing is what anthropologists *do* (Clifford 1986). Archaeologists also write, but most of all we *dig*. Thus when we do write, it is as if, as Hodder (1989:271) puts it: "the observations as well as the arefacts had been found, and as if the description is self evident, distanced from any onlooker or author". The procedures used in writing up a site report (eg. third person narrative) deny the importance of "the fundamental basis of all excavation: that it is an autobiographic, subjective, socially determined and often fundamentally ambiguous and/or contradictory set of interpretative activities" (Tilley, 1989: 278).

"The relationship between excavation and what gets written resembles that between an individual speech utterance and an underlying set of grammars. The excavation provides a set of grammars, often incoherent or contradictory, both constraining and enabling the production of a text. It is the nature of the production of these grammars and their relation to the act of writing that need to become a focus of attention" (Tilley, 1989:279).

We need to look at how our objects are produced, whether these be the objects produced during excavation, or the textual object produced as interpretation (or "truth", depending on one's view). In interpreting the grammars of the excavations archaeologists need to involve the community and/or the descendants of that past. This is necessary in order to produce a voice that is community-based and different from the voice of academic authority.

The potential exists for an idealisation of the process whereby people gain a voice and create their own pasts. Tilley (1989:280) says that "excavation has a unique role to play as a theatre where people may be able to produce their own pasts, pasts which are meaningful to them, not as expressions of a mythical heritage". I understand that the mythical heritage to which he refers is that created by academics - but as academic production does not occur within a vacuum, and does not necessarily produce the truth, this juxtapositioning of academic/community is idealised. It amounts to saying that a "people-created past" would be "true" as opposed to the "myths" that academics create.

While Hodder (1989:274) argues that "in preserving the heritage we have a duty to give it meaning", Tilley (1989:280) argues that as archaeologists we need to reflect more deeply on what we produce so that our products do not become "a form of production and marketing of the past in a manner directly equivalent to any other commodity." While we should acknowledge that we do "give the past meaning" (and we can work on ways of working with groups of people who want to create their own meaning), I do not think we should pretend that we are not participating in a contest for the most marketable past. That is exactly what we do. The way we write, our research choices, our paradigms and interpretations, are all part of the production of the past as a commodity in a highly competitive market. People who produce their own pasts would be competing in this market, and *their* productions would not be any less commodified.

It is important for archaeologists to reflect on precisely what we do produce - on site, in texts, and in public media such as museums. Museums in every sense participate in the commodification of the past,²⁷ and the effect of museum displays has been likened to archaeological practises:

"They ... bore the public, turned into passive spectators of a supplied image ..." (Tilley, 1989:276).

I would thus see two serious issues facing archaeological researchers in South Africa. The first issue is the lack of effective communication between archaeologists and the public, whether this be to communicate better the aims of archaeology, or whether this be at the more fundamental level of negotiating research and meaning (the one could

²⁷ See Shanks and Tilley (1987).

not be done successfully with out the other). The second issue is the method of research - academics have traditionally been able to research, in Fagans' words "with impunity" - without having to be in the least concerned about the community (in any sense) within which we researched. It has always been assumed that we could move from our institutional base into a "research area", gather our information at will, and return to our laboratories to analyse and interpret our material. Already archaeologists researching in this way are being seriously challenged by people who will no longer stand by and watch their resources being removed, or their past being interpreted by "academic experts".

The process of democratising the practise of archaeology is essential in order that communities can be empowered to produce their own accredited pasts co-operatively with academic researchers, so that they can acquire a voice with which to present their own past in, for example, museums. The first challenge in developing a People's Archaeology will be to get communities to begin posing questions.

CHAPTER FIVE

MUSEUMS OF MODERN MYTHOLOGIES

"It is still assumed in some quarters that museums are neutral environments and that museum activities - collecting, recording, researching, and exhibiting - can be carried out without bias." (Sue Kirby, 1988:99)

"...it is patently obvious that a significant number of South African museologists have a very limited view of museums as cultural institutions. They still have the Victorian (colonial?) precepts that museums are places for the collection of artefacts, and curation is fundamental to a museum's existence." (Andrew Smith, 1987:2)

A People's Archaeology has no chance of developing until communities begin to ask the questions - but this is not yet possible because of the power of the authoritative voice. The interplay of a Popular History or Archaeology and a People's History or Archaeology revolves around this power. Museums, one of the institutions that popularise the authoritative voice, have as yet not attempted to develop a strategy that might stimulate the kind of questioning needed to develop a People's Archaeology.

The popularising of the authoritative voice is evident in all mass media - in literature, in film, in newspapers, in museums. The task of examining the perpetuation of authoritative voice is vast and needs to be undertaken in specialised projects.¹ I have chosen to concentrate on museums. Given my concern with the power and perpetuation of authoritative voice I have chosen to focus on those museums that appear to be making changes, that appear to be interested in addressing the challenge to transform museums from state-dominated institutions to community-oriented educational spaces. To date, the project of museums has generally been to perpetuate the authoritative voice. In developing a critique of museums, I have examined some of the more liberal museums² in an assessment of the extent to which museums have the capacity to address concretely the tension between *authoritative* voice and *empowering* voice.

History becomes for each group a reference point in the process of trying to establish internal cohesion or identifying opposing groups, and of finding moral justification for its actions - and museums are always instruments of a particular history (Crimp, 1980:44). Museums present history, and because of this are unable, as institutions, to remain outside of the struggle around the past. The calls for People's History in South

1 See Pieters (1990) for a discussion on documentary and ethnographic film in South Africa.

2 See Appendix D for a map of Southern Africa indicating where the various museums, referred to in this chapter, are situated.

Africa, and the concern about "relevancy" of research in the academic environment, have made it obvious that state versions of history are unacceptable to the majority of South Africans, and have motivated museum personnel to address the way in which museums are perceived by most South Africans, and to address the problems in display content - this content may supporting ruling class versions of the South African past.

The level of social and political upheaval have made it near-impossible for any sector of South African society to remain oblivious to majority demands - such as those around education in general and history in particular. As education has rhetorically been established as a primary function of museums, it was only a matter of time before South African museums were drawn into this terrain of struggle. In that I have argued that archaeologists need to be taking an active responsibility at least for how research results are presented and communicated to the public, we too are drawn into any struggles around museum presentations of the past.

In the same way that South African archaeologists have been forced by internal and external pressures to address issues that have been the focus of attention and debate in Europe and the United States, so have museums now been forced to address issues that, while requiring specific attention to the South African context, are issues that are being addressed internationally by museum personnel. Museums all over the world are in a climate of change, and have been for some years.

"The museum as an institution is contested by some, upheld by others. There are those who would do away with it altogether; while others call for its adaptation and change. And there is the array of those, oblivious to these stirrings, who are quite satisfied with things as they are."³

This general comment in many ways reflects the tensions within and around South African museums that have become evident in recent years.

DISCOVERING THINGS?⁴

Scene: The Stone Age Archaeology display, South African Museum

"There's quite a lot to see in the Bushmen, and just stop me when we get to the Dinosaur section, okay?"

The volunteer leads a group of mothers and young children around the Stone Age Archaeology display and into African Cultures. A whistle-stop tour.

³ *Museum* 28(3) 1976:Editorial.

⁴ This is an edited version of verbatim comments which I overheard and wrote down in the South African Museum in Cape Town (June 1989).

"They just used to paint on top of each others' paintings", she explains. "And you know they sleep with their hands over their ears so the insects won't crawl in. Would you like to be a Bushman?"

Head pressed to glass, one child seems dismayed.

"It's very dirty, isn't it?"

Mother responds by explaining that things were different, and well, they didn't have Pick 'n Pay supermarkets like we do.

"Did we used to eat tortoises?" Further dismay.

"Well, the Bushmen did, but don't worry about it" answers mother as she gently tries to push her child on to the next display.

Persistence:-

"But did they just eat the heads? Did the tortoise die?"

Scene: A group of Std. 2 students, with teacher, in African cultures display.

"What did you write?" asks the teacher of a child filling in her worksheet. The teacher's "Ag no, man" type of response is shrivelling.

"Come on, write down the easy things, the short things", and then she tells them the answer.

Quickly!

Read the questions!

Don't be stupid!

Write down the answer!

Move on!

(It seems they don't have much time.)

Scene: Children stand in front of the display on Nama herders

(Sniggering)

"That's a man!"

"No, that's a lady!"

Sneering response: "Can't you tell the difference?"

Come on!

Do your drawings!

Don't waste time!

"Okay boys - move into the next room. Girls come into this room. Right! Boys! Girls! Move on now. Have you done your drawings? Are you discovering things?"

(Are you discovering things? And another whistle-stop tour ends).

In South Africa it seems that the first question around museums is "Where to start?". While the problematic existing displays *can* be used towards developing a critical and enquiring public through explanations of the contingency of museum displays,⁵ the problem then becomes one of first convincing people that museums *do* have something to offer. Given this it would seem that the first issue to tackle is that of content.

The body of literature that has appeared in the last decade, on the topic of bias in museums internationally, is vast.⁶ Kirby makes the point (1988:100) that the question of bias in museums has only recently been acknowledged as an issue by the museum profession, and it has not received much public attention. This observation would certainly hold for South Africa. Public attention to bias in museums has been minimal and perhaps one of the main reflections of a majority consciousness of museums has been the limited numbers of black and/or working-class South African museum visitors.⁷

The fact that most South Africans do not have an interest in the cultural memory produced in museums makes this memory all the more contestable. The lack of community involvement with museums could well be an indicator of the lack of validity of the particular cultural memory evoked. Lumley (1988) reflects on the extent to which the notion of museums as collections for scholarly research has been replaced by the notion of museums as major communicators of cultural values, where the role of scholars is in decline, and that of the marketing manager is on the rise. The observation is made with reference to museums in Europe, Britain and the United States, and it is reasonable to say that the situation in South Africa, in contrast, is one in which the scholars are still the guiding force in museums. This may have much to do with the fact that museums as centres of production of cultural memory have not really been

⁵ See for example Shanks and Tilley (1987).

⁶ See for example Lumley (1988) and Wallace (1986).

⁷ The lack of such visitors was the focus of much discussion at the SAMA 1987 conference. It should be noted in addition that very few (if any) museums carry out regular visitor surveys in South Africa - a fact that reflects in some way the relationship between museums and public in South Africa.

contested (in the way for example that formal education has been). There has as yet been no real focus on museums as a form of "cultural production", and this may be testimony to the lack of interest in museums on the part of the majority of South Africans.

A reflection of concern amongst museum personnel about bias that is patently obvious in South African museums could be seen at the Southern African Museums Association (SAMA) 1987 conference. I take this conference as a starting point in discussing museums in South Africa. It was in some ways a turning point for museum personnel in that it was the first time that the problem of museums, in relation to the broader social, political and economic context, had been seriously raised in a professional forum. The theme of this conference was *Museums in a changing and divided society*.⁸

Museums in a Changing and Divided Society⁹

A broad range of topics was raised and debated at the SAMA 1987 conference in Pietermaritzburg. Many papers presented direct challenges to existing museum structures, displays, education programmes - in fact to the tradition of museums generally. The more challenging papers focussed on issues such as:

1. illiteracy figures in South Africa, and the culture of violence that young South Africans grow up with;¹⁰
2. whether museums in South Africa are fit institutions to carry out the task assigned to museums;¹¹
3. the problem of presenting one national heritage in a seriously divided community, with specific reference to differences in the Irish nationalist and Protestant presentations of the past;¹²
4. an empirical base for much of the criticism levelled at museums in terms of neglect and exclusion;¹³
5. student perceptions of the Natal Museum environment - too cold, quiet, and too near the police station, with museums being seen as "extensions of the perception that things are more important than people, with black people always being seen as less than human."¹⁴

8 Subsequent interviews, during 1988 and 1989, with museum directors and education officers at two South African museums allowed me to follow up the extent to which museum staff were taking seriously the 1987 SAMA initiative. See Appendix B for interviews.

9 I have indicated in this chapter where I have used verbatim comments from general discussion at the SAMA 1987 conference.

10 Wilson (1987).

11 Kinard (1987).

12 Thompson (1987).

13 Wright and Mazel (1987).

14 Witbooi (1987).

6. the problems of presenting African culture in essentially white museums by white museum people.¹⁵

Many important issues were thus highlighted. These included the issue of museums being institutionalised proof of white domination where the presentational focus of most museums is on white/colonial/settler history. Architecture of museums was raised as a problem, in that the typical official-style architecture of most of the large South African museums is potentially intimidating for visitors. The problem of museums being seen not only as irrelevant, but as unacceptable, is an issue with important implications if the traditionally narrow focus of collections policies and display content holds no attraction for the majority of South Africans. Ideological filtering by museologists, as an ever-present problem, was discussed in terms of the difficulties in presenting completely objective and neutral displays. Also raised and discussed were the problems of creating better outreach facilities (such as newsletters, mobile services and teacher education programmes) in order that more South Africans become familiar with the museum as an educational resource and preserver of our cultural heritage.

There is an acknowledgement that none of these issues can be addressed by simply emulating developments in European and American museums. In the words of Brian Wilmot:¹⁶

"For many decades South African museums have clung - probably more subconsciously than consciously - to the belief that their exhibits should in both magnitude and detail emulate those to be found in the major European and North American museums. We can, however, not match the finances, personnel or collected material of those museums and so we must find alternative ways to approach exhibits" (Albany Museum Annual Report, 1985 - 1987:3).

Similarly, Cluver¹⁷ warns that South African Museums should not try to model themselves on overseas examples, emphasising the need to take the particular context into account when planning new directions for museums.¹⁸

Recent developments in the United States and elsewhere have seen museums becoming places for eating, study, listening to music, seeing films and holding discussions (Lumley 1988). Similar developments can be seen at the South African Museum in Cape Town. In terms of changes in public perceptions of museums, there is no doubt that this museum has done a great deal to increase the word *museum* in the current social vocabulary of Cape Town's middle class. Many activities are held out of normal museum hours that attract this sector of South African society. But museums have

¹⁵ Khumalo (1987).

¹⁶ Director, Albany Museum, Grahamstown.

¹⁷ Director, South African Museum, Cape Town.

¹⁸ Cluver (interview, 1988) - see Appendix B.

traditionally catered to this class, and the changes that are urgently needed are those that in some way direct the activities of museums to the rest of South African society.

While there is acknowledgement that we should not be modelling ourselves directly on overseas examples, there is little or no contact between South African and other *African* museums, from whom we may gain insight into the way in which the kinds of issues in the South African context are being dealt with elsewhere in Southern Africa.¹⁹ These would be issues such as illiteracy, enormous school groups, and too little time for focussed education programmes.

There is also a growing awareness that the mass media are very powerful and that museums should not be trying to fill a role that is in competition with this. It is felt (Wilmot 1988)²⁰ that while the qualitative difference between museums and the mass media is that the museum has the ability to "show *real* things", this showing needs to *challenge* people.²¹

The museum director, too, has begun to play a different role²² - one that involves interaction within the museum and publicly - and there is no longer space or time for the director as "super-scientist" (Wilmot 1988).²³ Wilmot has also expressed that "the director is there to see that the museum succeeds".²⁴

Brian Stuckenburg²⁵ commented (SAMA 1987) on the fact that in a different type of South African museum structure - *ie.* one which catered more for "the people of South Africa" - the "high standards in our museums may not be the same standards in museums elsewhere". The notion of "high standards" is problematic if European and American museums are being posited as the relative marker, and this thus begs a questioning of the criteria for determining standards in South African museums. This is not to question the degree of rigour in research and presentation. Rather, this points to the fact that museums are presenting research conclusions through inadequate educational services. This cannot be addressed either by a lowering of the standards of rigour (as Stuckenburg's comment seems to imply), or through an appeal to a notion of "standards" that relies on criteria set in Europe and America.

If a "different type of museum structure" means a more community-oriented approach in the nature of museums, a bringing of the museums "closer to the people",²⁶ there is no reason why this should imply a lowering of standards. This also raises the issue of the

19 Sheryl Ozinsky, Public Relations Officer, South African Museum, Cape Town - Interview (1989), see Appendix B; Mrs Nduku, Director, Museum of Human Sciences in Harare, Zimbabwe - Interview (1989), see Appendix B.

20 Interview (1988) - see Appendix B.

21 See Lumley (1988) for comments on this.

22 See Lumley (1988:15) for the way in which the role of the scholar is in decline, and that of the marketing manager is growing in status and influence.

23 Interview (1988) - see Appendix B.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Director of the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg.

26 Rev. B. Witbooi (SAMA 1987) - "the most important task of museums".

particular areas in which standards are called into question. If this relates to display, then I would acknowledge that "moving closer to the people" might necessitate extra expenditure in terms of expanding museum services. This in turn would limit the funds available for traditional museum display techniques, such as expensive perspex and specially lit displays. Thus the option of cheap temporary displays would need to be examined.

It must be noted, though, that cheaper display methods do not necessarily imply a poorer quality learning experience. There are many relatively cheap, effective methods of communication that will often be more appropriate in Southern Africa than the high-tech "First World" methods to which we have become accustomed.²⁷ However, the expense on displays cannot really be discussed until there is clarification in *what* is to be displayed, *how* it is to be displayed, *where* it is to be displayed, and *by what methods* communication will take place.

On becoming Relevant

The public face of museums and its obvious problems has drawn much attention to the issue of museums and education. Much of the criticism levelled at museums at the SAMA 1987 conference was that museums concentrate almost solely on research, and little on how this is communicated. The main issue at the SAMA education officers section meeting during this conference was that the educative function of museums is not taken seriously, and education officers have very little influence in the decision-making structures of museums.

There has been a "move-to-relevancy" rationale operating for a few years now in some South African museums. Wilmot, in 1987, argued that "we have to develop a new image and make all more aware of our true worth".²⁸ Amongst those who have been discussing the above issues, most of the talk has been around museums being or becoming "relevant", getting visitors into the museums, educating the public around the "museum as resource", and the role of museum education services in achieving these ends:

"Museums in South Africa are in a virtual *impasse*... there is an ever-pressing need for them to become socially relevant" (Wilmot, 1988).²⁹

It seems that this has had its greatest impact in the sphere of education, increasingly being seen as a crucial function of museums, and being accorded higher status and increased funding in line with this shift. It is thought that the only way that museums

²⁷ See for example *The Zebra's Voice* on how the National Museum and Art Gallery in Gaborone, Botswana cope with limited funds in an African context.

²⁸ Albany Museum Annual Report (April 1985 - March 1987:3).

²⁹ Albany Museum Annual Report (April 1987- March 1988:8).

can function is by liaising with teachers, as the education department - ultimately the most important - is where the museum is introduced to people.³⁰

Wilmot (1988)³¹ has emphasised the importance of involving professional officers in museum education, saying that staff and researchers "cannot remain islands". Simon Hall,³² former archaeologist at the Albany Museum in Grahamstown, has commented though, that no research staff ten years ago would have seen education as their responsibility, and there still exists friction between the education and research function of staff at the Albany Museum. The educative responsibilities of research staff are, however, being written into the Albany Museum's job descriptions.³³

Some personnel in museums believe that museums are relevant - but that too few people realise this.³⁴ This is testimony to the fact that not only is the content in museums problematic, but that a process of negotiation with communities is urgently required in order to establish the needs of a broader sector of society.

The general feeling at the SAMA 1987 conference was that museums do not adequately serve the community. The challenges were directed at this problem, but with the focus on "how do we attract black audiences to our museums?". This was also expressed in the following type of sentiment - museums need to create posts for black education officers who can handle visits from black schoolchildren and develop programmes for them.

Along with the employment of black education officers, the concept of the Mobile Museum Service³⁵ seems to be regarded in some senses as a panacea for the problems highlighted. The Albany Museum's mobile service, the oldest in South Africa, is seen as a crucial function of the education department for the following reasons:

1. that it provides a resource base for use in classrooms;
2. that it promotes awareness of natural and cultural history;
3. that it extends and enriches the school curriculum;
4. that it promotes awareness of the museum.

(Van Zyl and Wilmot 1987).

30 Cecil Nonqane, Education Officer, Albany Museum - Interview (1988); Wouter Holleman, Deputy Director, Albany Museum, Grahamstown - Interview (1988). See Appendix B.

31 Interview (1988) - see Appendix B.

32 pers. comm., Sept. 1988.

33 "Although the successful applicant will have the facilities to work towards a higher degree, the incumbent of the post will have clear curatorial responsibilities as well as making regular input into exhibitions and education programmes (my emphasis)." Advertisement for *Archaeologist*, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 1990.

34 Dr. M. Cluver, Director, South African Museum, Cape Town: Interview (1988) - see Appendix B.

35 See Hooper-Greenhill (1988:213) on mobile museum services, in terms of the public that the museum serves.

Bias in presentation

Awareness of the need to correct the obvious bias in museum display is quite high amongst the more liberal museum personnel in South Africa. Most of this awareness, however, is expressed in terms of the constraints on executing changes.

For example, Wouter Holleman³⁶ has commented, in relation to the presentation of African histories, that black history still has to be gathered and that, though museums have the potential to communicate this history, illiteracy and the effects of state control have inhibited this process.³⁷

Sheryl Ozinsky (1989)³⁸ has said that while things *can* happen to change displays there are many constraints on presenting a past that is different to what is in the collections.

There is also a sense in which the South African Museum and the Albany Museum regard themselves as distanced from state intervention and dominant presentations, but this rhetoric contains the contradictions inherent in institutions that are state-subsidised. For example Wilmot says that: "the government say in school tours and the Junior Club at the museum is none, but the museum would get rapped over the knuckles if topics were "over the top".³⁹

There does seem to be an underlying rationale that I argue could be very misleading. While bias in museums displays is being acknowledged as a problem, the major problem, as stated, is that black South Africans are not visiting museums in the desired numbers. Problems of "illiteracy" and "irrelevance" are cited as two of the reasons, and the solution is seen in the employment of black education officers. Crudely put, the rationale appears to be that *irrelevancy/relevancy is measurable by black visitor numbers*. It is thought that the employment of black education officers would do much to increase these numbers, which in turn would indicate an increasing relevancy of museums to the broader South African community.

Community

"All too often present-day museums are regarded by their curators as providing lessons for a homogeneous but perhaps non-existent public, a public which exists mainly in the curator's mind: a group of well-bred, culture-hungry, beauty-loving, logically-minded people with plenty of time to spare, inexhaustible physical stamina and, above all, at least an arts degree" (de Varine-Bohan, 1976:139).

The reality of the South African public which the museum desires to "convert" into a "museum-literate" public is very different - an enormous sector of illiterate South

³⁶ Deputy Director, Albany Museum, Grahamstown.

³⁷ Interview (1988) - see Appendix B.

³⁸ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

Africans,⁴⁰ a massive working class with little interest in museums, and museums that present a culture for which the majority are in no way hungering. The breakdown of "public" in Chapter Four obviously applies to museums - who is this public to which the museums are directing all their activities?⁴¹

Khumalo's⁴² comment (SAMA 1987) is quite revealing in this regard:

"There is something about the South African museums that does not reflect what I am. The view it reflects is foreign to me. They portray the white experience. If there is anything there, it is because in some way it has been part of white experience. Museums are not African, not South African. They are not part of me".

There is an awareness that museums have to go out actively to get support, with community consent, to fit in with what people want (Kannemeyer 1989).⁴³ One staff member at the South African Museum stated that: "We'd welcome such co-operation with people from local communities who could tell us a lot more than we know already ... In principle we are very open to encouraging black people in our local communities to get involved in museum projects that will eventually feed back into the public side of the museum." (Davison 1989).⁴⁴

Wilson has commented (SAMA 1987) that "it is in the thinking through of national culture where surely the museums have a tremendous role to play. And culture does *not* equal group interest."

Cultural Memory

Of the 27 or so museums listed in the Cape Peninsula,⁴⁵ only 2 carry informational displays on what the guide terms "prehistory".⁴⁶ Thus our cultural memory created through museums is limited indeed. The idea of "the museum" is *preservation* - preservation of a past, and in most cases the public celebration of the dominant culture of the ruling class. Yet the most often-expressed dilemma of South African museums (SAMA 1987) is: "How do we bring black people into our museums?" (as visitors). Museum-type knowledge is embedded in the politics of colonialism, and it is not a cultural memory I should imagine the majority of South Africans have much pleasure in sharing.

39 Interview (1988) - see Appendix B.

40 illiteracy figures - see Wilson (1987).

41 See Hooper-Greenhill (1988) on the need to understand the differences between various museum-using groups

42 Mr. J. Khumalo, African Languages Department, University of Witwatersrand.

43 Education Officer, South African Museum, Cape Town: Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

44 Davison interviewed on Video (1989).

45 Cape Museums Guide (1988).

46 See also Wright and Mazel (1987) on this issue in Natal museums.

The South African Museum claims a proud reputation of being as objective and as open as possible - "If anyone wanted to contest the information on display they are welcome to do so...that is their right to do so..." (Davison 1989).

Thus museum staff express the major museum problematic as being how to encourage black people to come into "our" museums. As explained above, the route towards dealing with this problem has been expressed in terms of employing black education officers to run programmes (separate, but equal) for black students. The success of this in terms of museums managing to avoid becoming "slightly ridiculous, completely irrelevant decorations"⁴⁷ remains to be seen. Wilson and Ramphela (1989) point out that the role of museums is an important one in the challenge to forge a national culture - but the national identity that museums *currently* evoke is not what these authors are referring to.

As Bennett (1988:84) points out, "the question of how things get displayed in museums cannot be divorced from questions concerning the training of curators or the structures of museum control, and management...". In South Africa the situation has become increasingly confused, as further measures of control and (mis)management have been introduced in the form of "own affairs" and "general affairs" museums.⁴⁸

Southern African Museums

Given the "big push" of SAMA 1987, the critiques of South African museums, the rhetoric indicating shifts in thinking and the evidence to show that education is being taken more seriously as a function, it would be too easy to see these problems, of museums as "bastions of ideology",⁴⁹ as peculiarly South African in their apartheid-derived forms.

In assessing the success of the project of the more liberal museums in South Africa, it is clear that museums in post-colonial southern African countries should provide a test-case.

If the approach of the South African museums is correct (in that changing visitor profiles is preceived as the route to transforming the museum), then other southern African museums would by this stage look fundamentally different to South African museums. If South African museums are serious, at least about addressing the audience problems in South Africa (eg. illiteracy, big groups of visitors), then communication with

⁴⁷ Wilson and Ramphela (1989).

⁴⁸ This state decision is in line with the policy of separate control by the different White, Coloured and Indian Houses of Parliament of all health, educational and cultural services, including museums.

⁴⁹ See Wright and Mazel (1987).

other museums in Southern Africa is essential. It is these museums, rather than those in Europe and America, that are more likely to be addressing similar problems. As this has not been happening formally, mostly because of the international strategies of isolation towards South Africa, I felt it was important to investigate the above issues (in terms of changes) through this research project.

My next task, then, was to assess the difference between South African museums and Southern African museums no longer bridled by the political yolk of colonial control. I was interested primarily in establishing the extent to which presentations had changed in Zimbabwe since independence.

Museums in Zimbabwe

There are five main museums funded by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Zimbabwe, namely the museums at Mutare (East); Masvingo (South); Bulawayo (West); Gweru (Midlands); and Harare (North). In order to rationalise the functions of the museums service and to avoid the duplication of research and collections, the National Museums and Monuments Commission embarked on a programme of centralisation of research departments, and of decentralisation of interpretive departments. Thus, for example, all human science research is based in Harare, and all natural science research is based in Bulawayo.

Apart from structural and administrative changes, museums in Zimbabwe have changed little since independence in 1980 (Nduku 1989).⁵⁰ After independence it was stated that resettlement, education and health were the top priority, and it was even suggested by some that museums should close. Museums are thus competing for funds with unemployment projects and rural development programmes (Collett 1989).⁵¹

"It's not that the government doesn't appreciate museums, but there are other priorities" (Nduku 1989).⁵²

Funding problems have clearly placed severe limits on the museums' activities⁵³ and this has necessitated the careful planning of an integrated research, education and conservation programme in each centre (Hughes 1989).⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁵¹ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁵² Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁵³ National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe Annual Report (1985-1986).

⁵⁴ Archaeologist, Museum of Natural Science, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

Education

Since independence more emphasis has been placed on conservation and interpretation, with efforts being made to try and get people to *understand* what they see (Collett, interview Feb 1989). While there has been expansion of the education service at the Harare museum, it is still a service predominantly used by schools in the lower-density suburbs (and therefore more affluent). For the rural schools, particularly, transport and funding are the major obstacles restricting use of the museum education services. While museum education officers are doing their best to take the museum to the people, limited resources prevent the amount of work that should be done in the remote areas.⁵⁵

Martin Sanderson, education officer at Bulawayo Natural History Museum, has commented that the service at Bulawayo is probably not as well used as it was pre-independence, but feels that this is due to teachers being unused to museums as a cultural/educational resource. Teachers, not oriented to working outside of the classroom, are not familiar with what the museum has to offer.⁵⁶

Bias in presentation

Dave Collett,⁵⁷ archaeologist at Great Zimbabwe, points out that it is easy enough to say "archaeologists should tell people what they find", but this automatically means the information has already been filtered. Collett pointed out that most archaeologists present the information without really caring what the public believes (for example, the perpetuation of the Phoenician theory of Great Zimbabwe). In Collett's view people will create the past that they want, and he thus believes that the most that archaeologists can hope to do is to give people "things to see", so that when they do create a past, they can base their creation on concrete objects.

Hughes (1989)⁵⁸ acknowledges the problems of museums where messages, unintended by the author of the display, are picked up by visitors. He cites an example from Khami, one of the main *dzimbahwe*⁵⁹ that forms part of the pattern of *madzimbahwe* distributed over south-eastern Africa. As one enters the Khami Site Museum there is a display on stone-using gatherer-hunters, evidence of whom forms part of the importance of the Khami area. When asked who built Khami, a visitor replied "Stone Age People". The influence for this answer was clearly linked to the display on stone-using people. In this instance, the display had not clearly explained that there exists an occupation depth of

⁵⁵ National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe Annual Report (1985-1986).

⁵⁶ Martin Sanderson, Education Officer, Museum of Natural Science, Bulawayo. pers comm. Feb 1989.

⁵⁷ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁵⁸ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

stone-using cultures that goes back more than forty thousand years prior to occupation by farming communities.

Nduku (1989)⁶⁰ recalled a fairly widely held view at the time of independence that the reminders of the past should be destroyed, but Nduku's view is that people need to realise that being reminded of the past is part of history. She says: "the *reason* for an action is always open to varying interpretations, but the action still occurred". Her view is that the museum needs to be as inclusive as possible. Rather than a strategy of actively refuting everything previously taught (ie. pre-independence), museums should rather include that which was previously excluded. Nduku suggested that it might be useful to put up both the pre-independence and the post-independence versions of some historical events, but at the moment this was not possible.

"Interpretations since independence have tended not to *deny* facts, but to rewrite or represent the story." (Nduku 1989).⁶¹

Funding problems have also placed limits on the number of posts available. This has meant, for example, that the archaeologist at Great Zimbabwe has had to fill the roles of display artist, education officer and researcher. This obviously has implications for the amount of work that can be done in each area. Funding therefore also set limits to the types of changes that can be made to displays (although, according to Collett (1989) the desire to change "is only partly there").

The main change in display in the Museum of Human Sciences in Harare is the replacement of the colonial "Pioneer Column" display with a Shona Village display. At the Museum of Military History, in Gweru, changes in content have been made since 1983 through the inclusion of information about the First and Second Chimurenga.⁶²

Nduku points out⁶³ that "the changes are not aimed at refuting every statement put across, as we too stand to be corrected by future generations".

Displays in Zimbabwe and Botswana⁶⁴

My examination of some Southern African museums was not intended to be a comprehensive study, but rather a look at some of the displays on gatherer-hunters and herders, in order to gain an understanding of the rhetoric governing the processes through which objects (including casts of people) have been assembled into particular configurations. I refer below to display examples in two museums.

⁶⁰ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁶¹ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁶² Zimbabwean Wars of Liberation

⁶³ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

⁶⁴ These descriptions are based on the displays as observed in February 1989. The displays may have subsequently changed.

The first example is at the Museum of Human Sciences in Harare. One of the first displays that visitors experience on entering this museum is a display on the "Stone Age". This display contains a graphic sequence illustrating the two million to eighty thousand years before present. The physiological development of humans is illustrated next to this sequence, displayed to fit graphically into the same sequential time scale. The skull used to illustrate *Homo Sapiens* is specified as a *Bushman* skull. The text on *Homo Sapiens* reads :

"Thinking Man, early *Homo Sapiens* began a steady development of culture and social organisation."

The connection between the earliest *Thinking Man* and the skull of a *Bushman* holds a number of implications - the main implication being that *Bushmen* are the earliest type of humans, just learning to think. *Bushmen* are thus at the bottom end of the steady "development towards culture and social organisation", and are therefore a perfect example of "man in his most primitive state".

This display leads on to a display about *The Bushmen*. The central signboard reads:

THE BUSHMEN
People of the Past...
Still survive today.

From this sign an arrow points to a map of Africa, which surrounds an illustration of a male figure, equipped with quiver and bow and clothed in leather skins. There is a length of text about the Bushmen being our "living link with the Stone Age", a text which includes a physical description.⁶⁵

Opposite this display stands a manners-and-customs display of photographs and objects, entitled *How the Bushmen Live Now*. The text reads:

"The Bushmen are a cheerful people who express themselves through dancing and singing."

Often the most revealing method of assessing visitor responses is listening to comments made by visitors in the galleries. One of the comments I heard in the Harare Museum was made in response to the *How the Bushmen Live Now* exhibit. The visitor commented:

"When you go and look for these people in the bush where they live, they just run away."

It is a useful comment, in that it reveals the extent to which the displays perpetuate the public perception that *Bushmen* are people who not only still live in skins, but who can be sought out, or who *should* be sought out, in the bush "where they live". Another

⁶⁵ The *bodyscape* (Pratt 1986) over which we, as researchers and museum visitors, can gaze, can "look in" at these "primitive people".

comment overheard in response to these displays was made with reference to a *Bushman* cave scene. This scene displays a standing male figure, painting on the side of the cave. Next to the man a woman squats next to a hearth, while a child plays in the foreground. A visitor commented:

"See how the man paints the house while the woman cooks the food".

Information has been compacted into this display in such a manner that a man paints figures on the wall of the cave while a woman does household tasks - in the same space and time. The way the past is used to legitimate the present, however unintentionally constructed, is clear from this display. If the *Bushmen*, "who can only just think", operate in this way - with men engaged in tasks such as painting, while women are engaged in food preparation - then this must be natural, instinctual. Gender roles as displayed thus become immutable.

At the National Museum and Art Gallery in Gaborone, Botswana; there is very little display space assigned to either gathering and hunting or to herding. On entering the galleries, visitors can read an information board on the arrival of farmers in Southern Africa, which makes reference to gatherer-hunters (*The San*):

"...they entered a land where the only inhabitants, the San or Sarwa (better known as the Bushmen), lived by hunting wild animals and collecting plants and insects."

Further on in the galleries a board informs visitors that:

"... the earliest farmers came from different areas... in Botswana they traded with and married the earlier inhabitants, the San and Khoe (Sarwa and Kgothu)."

The *River San* are also referred to in a display on the *Peoples of the Okavango Delta*.

When questioned about the limited mention of gatherer-hunter and herder communities, a museum staff member explained that there are no displays on *San* in the Gaborone museum because the "first gallery" has not been completed. The galleries in this museum are designed to work in a series that visitors would move through in order to gain a full and integrated understanding of Botswana, its position internationally today, and its position in the long history of human existence. The "first gallery" displays are planned to begin at ninety million years ago, in order to convey to visitors the age of Earth. Displays on the Early, Middle and Later Stone Ages will follow, in order to position Botswana in the context of Southern and Eastern Africa. This display will try to link gatherer-hunters and herders to, respectively, the Stone Age and the introduction of domestic stock (Campbell 1989).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Interview (1989) - see Appendix B.

An element of these constructions is the repressive normative European tradition of time. The temporal frame of European knowledge is important in that the time of subordinate cultures is tied up with judgements of value, backwardness and lack of "civilised" values. Other cultures are located in a different subordinate time - thus the language of time is important in such presentations. It is "a model of time as "progress" or "evolution", moving from lower to higher forms that underpins the philosophy of the late Victorian museum and its spatial organisation" (Lumley, 1988:6).

It is clear from a description of these displays that there has been little success, in post-colonial Southern African museums, to move away from colonial presentations of gatherer-hunters and herders. There is little difference between the rhetoric governing the construction and communication of displays in the museums in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa. Still presented as a "living link with the Stone Age", it will take more than changing the visitor profile at museums to change the manner in which *Bushmen* are presented in displays.

The Museum Solution

There are many ways in which museums are trying to make existing structures functional. These include programmes aimed at bringing in teachers in order that they become "museum literate", developing an understanding of the museums as "educational resource", and becoming familiar with what museums have to offer. Some museums have revamped existing physical structures, in the hope that this will make the museum more attractive to "the public". Some museums display tri-lingual labelling - in English, Afrikaans and an African language.⁶⁷

Recent efforts have been directed towards the employment of black education officers, adding to the apartheid spectrum of white and coloured education officers.⁶⁸ This highlights the contradictions inherent in a state-funded South African Museum, where although the education is not directly "state education", the educational situation still reflects state structures - where black and white groups visit separately, and are dealt with by different education officers, often seconded by the appropriate education department.⁶⁹

The above points are not to negate teacher education programmes, revamping of physical structures, different language labels, nor the employment of black education

⁶⁷ Mr Khumalo, of the African Languages Department at the University of Witwatersrand, in reference to this labelling strategy as a "tower of Babel", commented that some of the museum translations into African languages are so bad as to be insulting (SAMA 1987).

⁶⁸ The rationale, for example at the South African Museum, is that "We are here presenting Natural History, and we are presenting it for everyone" (Cluver (1989) interview - see Appendix B).

⁶⁹ That is, from the White, Coloured or Indian Departments of Education - see Chapter Two.

officers to overcome the problems of language and to deal with the different educational conditions of black students in South Africa. These are all valid approaches in themselves. However, when the bottom-line issues within museums, such as the development of an understanding of the needs of black communities, are not being addressed, it does appear that these may not be long term solutions.

Museums, in American terms, are "generally financed by conservative donors and oriented to affluent whites" and have "seldom attempted to shake entrenched values or encourage their patrons to reconsider comfortable perceptions of social reality" (Chappel, 1989:103). This would certainly hold for South African museums, and as yet, little has been done to alter this situation in Southern African museums.

My main theoretical concern, as I have previously outlined, is around the links between the formation of knowledge and the communication of knowledge. The practical concerns are at this stage mostly with museum education, and the problems summarised are thus:

- how can museum staff work towards using existing displays to empower visitors towards raising questions about what they see?
- how should museums be encouraging "the public" to visit museums so that this questioning can start in the first place?
- what can be done to address adequately the educational needs of the majority of South Africans (needs as defined through negotiating with communities)?

The questions are not new, but my argument is simply this:

firstly, that museum displays should be structured so as to encourage visitors to ask questions, in order to challenge museum authority and to provide pertinent questions for research; and secondly, that far more people should not only have access to museum knowledge in its stationery and mobile form, but should also have a say in the structure and the content of displays.

As Shanks and Tilley recommend:

"We must present specific acts of construction, work in progress, varied forms of relationship with the artefactual past instead of a fixed relation of representation of a completed past. The museum can allow the visitor to construct pasts along with the archaeologist-curator: participation not as a means to a pre-given, pre-discovered end, but as an open process of constructing different pasts." (1987:98).

However, an "open process" of constructing different pasts necessitates dealing with the authority with which "legitimate" knowledge has traditionally been presented. It will only be possible for communities to begin asking questions towards constructing different and empowering pasts once the power of authoritative knowledge is

challenged. And understanding the process of construction of expert or "legitimate" knowledge (such as is presented in museums) is an essential step towards challenging authoritative voice.

CHAPTER SIX

TEXTUALISED HOTTENTOTS

"You are not a country, Africa

You are a concept,

Fashioned in our minds ..." (Malvern van Wyk Smith, 1988 - frontispiece).

The authoritative-voice version of herder history is that version presented most often to the public in the authoritative media - museums, books, films and newspapers. In order to challenge this voice/version it is necessary to understand its origins, and to understand its construction as the voice of authority and as an iconography.

I have chosen to examine the manner in which the table of knowledge about southern African herders has been constructed. I have done this by examining how these groups have been constructed and represented, and how the actual physical violence which virtually exterminated them was grounded on greater epistemological "truths" - such as language, race, culture, and morals. These "truths" were constructed in a manner that disallowed the incorporation of *difference* into an understanding of language, race and culture. They were constructed in a manner that usually disqualified "the different" from full participation in social and political structures.

The link here is between knowledge and identity - the knowledge about the herders' "otherness" in terms of the dominant white ideal, and the manner in which European identity was constructed around this knowledge. In this light I can then ground strategies like racial destruction and symbolic capture in museums, on epistemological grounds - on the fundamental shape of the knowledge which has allowed these strategies and informed the iconography.

My analysis of the iconography of a southern African cultural Other (in this case, Hottentots) is an attempt to understand shifting colonial mindsets, rather than an effort to re-present Southern African herder society. I have attempted to develop an understanding of the ways in which the colonising and imperialist project of the European powers was dependent on certain portrayals of "the native". My work is informed by an understanding that Europeans have for centuries functioned on an "idea of Europe", creating from this an "idea of Africa". Denys Hay defines the "idea of Europe" as a "collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans..." (Said, 1978:7). It is the idea of European identity as superior in comparison with all non-European people and cultures that has contributed towards

European culture being established as hegemonic both inside and outside Europe. The identification of "us" as opposed to "others" has been a major component of European culture (Said 1978).

Coetzee (1988:19) interprets the presentation of Hottentots in the literature in terms of *idleness*, and he stresses the importance of understanding prevailing European attitudes to idleness when Europe was colonising the Cape. Idleness became the religious, moral and ethical weapon by which to undermine the power of certain groups of people. Similarly, we need to understand prevailing European attitudes about sexuality and perceptions of the body, and to look at the way in which these European perceptions were used as weapons of control.

The European Imagination¹

By the 18th century the European imagination was a very active collective endeavour, much influenced by explorers' and travellers' descriptions of a "rich assortment of semihuman creatures", a descriptive tradition at least two thousand years old (Malefijt, 1984:88). In medieval times images of mythological monsters were regularly evoked by religious leaders in the teaching of moral lessons. By the 18th century, European mythology included monsters that had "monstrous habits" - they were naked, lascivious, promiscuous and filthy. These monsters had a bad smell and no religion. They ate snakes, lizards, dogs, mice, fleas and flies. The description of weird "man-beasts" became such an entrenched tradition that when Linnaeus worked out his classification of natural things in the 18th Century, he included the species *Homo Monstrosus* (Malefijt, 1984:88). Christianity, as the western European religion, was understood by Europeans to be *the way, the truth, the light*, and as such exerted its influence all-pervasively on the way in which Africa was produced and imagined² Increasingly, African people were constructed as these mythological monsters.

Africa - as a continent, as a concept, as an image - was constructed for Europeans by Europeans. Africa was produced for Europe, and the principal producers were the explorer-writers, producing for the European imagination (Pratt 1986).

¹ I use the homogeneous "Europe" and "European" as valid only as opposed to "Africa", and I have not taken nationalist divisions into account.

² As Coetzee shows in his work on idleness (Coetzee 1988).

Travel-writing and imagining the Cape

Physical descriptions form part of all the early travel literature about the Cape. Apart from the ordinary "of middle stature, yellowish skin" type of description, one area of the body of the Hottentot was always mentioned -the genital area. Most descriptions note that the women had enlarged labia minora that protruded markedly beyond the vulva. In these descriptions the women also had unusually long breasts which facilitated the feeding of back-borne children by a simple swinging of a breast over the shoulder. The men reportedly had very large penises and usually had only one testicle.

An account from the journey of Bartholomew Dias in 1488 comments on the people of the Cape that "since they had no language which could be understood, we could have no speech with them; but rather they drove off the cattle inland, as if terrified at such a new matter, so that we could learn no more of them that they were blacks, with woolly hair like those of Guinea".³ Other accounts of the late 15th century describe the "men" as "swarthy", with reference to people as "blacks".⁴ A 1579 account,⁵ that is marked as the "the first English account", refers to "the shore so evill, that nothing could take land, and the land itselfe so full of Tigers, and people that are sauage (sic) and killers of all strangers".

Cornelis de Houtman's account of 1595⁶ is the first to describe the indigenes of the Cape as people who "always stank greatly since they besmeared themselves with fat and grease". But it is in 1598 that the first full physical description of the people of the Cape appears:

"The people are not circumcised; their colour is Olive black ... their haire curled and blacke as the Negroes of Angola, their words are for the most part in-articulate, and in speaking, they clocke with the Tongue like a brood Hen, which clocking and the words are pronounced together, verie strangely...".⁷

This description seems to have set the format for the next hundred or more years of travel-writing descriptions.

By 1601 the indigenes are named as "negroes or savages"⁸ with the description "yellowish in colour ... having a very strange speech, clucking like turkeys"⁹ reflecting the beginnings of a standard. By 1612 the descriptions appear quite standardised - brute and savage people with no religion, no language, no laws, government or manners; and comments are included such as:

³ Raven-Hart (1967:1).

⁴ Ibid. p.3-4.

⁵ Ibid. p.14.

⁶ Ibid. p.18.

⁷ Ibid. p.20.

⁸ Ibid. p.27.

⁹ Ibid. p.28.

"it is a greatt pittie that such creattures as they bee should injoy so sweet a countrey... their faces like an Appe or Babownne..."¹⁰

In 1649 Jean-Baptiste Tavernier writes:

"Of all the people I met with in my journeying I found none so horrible and beastly as the Camouks...and those of the Cape de bone Esperance which are called Kaffers or Hottentots. When they speak they fart with their tongues in their mouths, yet, although their speech is almost without separation of word from word, they understand each other very readily..."¹¹

While some of the accounts are less violent in descriptive terms, there is only one pre-1652 account that is sympathetic:¹²

"Others will say that the natives are brutish and cannibals, from whom nothing good is to be expected, and that we shall have to be on our guard continually, but this is only a sailors yarn as shall be more closely shown and denied ... the fault is not on the side of the natives, but lies in the uncivilised and ungrateful conduct of our folk..."¹³

On the peculiarities of Hottentots

A 1605 account includes a marginal note that "some of their men have but one stone".¹⁴ This is not mentioned again until 1612,¹⁵ but by 1620 appears to be a standard inclusion in the description of men. The references to women's physical appearance seem to begin with an account in 1609: "The women ...have large breasts and ugly, greasy black hair".¹⁶ 1612 marks the first appearance of descriptions of women exposing themselves: "They were shamefac't at first; but at our returne homewards they would lift up their Rat-skinnes and shew their privities. Their breasts hang to the middle..."¹⁷

By 1616¹⁸ the description of women includes "carrying their sucking infants under the skins upon their back, and their breasts, hanging down like bag-pipes, they put up with their hands to their children, that they may suck them over their shoulders". By 1627, this description has become standard - "What the generality of the Natives are, I cannot say, but some we saw were semi-eunuchs ... the women give suck, the Uberous Dugg being stretched over their naked shoulder".¹⁹ The first real mention of what became known as "the Hottentot Apron"²⁰ appears in 1639, in which Johan Abrecht von Mandelslo writes that "as an ornament the women have in certain places short thongs hanging down, cut from the body..."²¹

10 Ibid.p.58.

11 Ibid.p.179-180.

12 The analysis I have used in this chapter allows me to argue that the above account could in no way have become the dominant language in which the indigenes were textualised.

13 Ibid.p.177-178.

14 Ibid.p.33.

15 Ibid.p.60:"The men have but one stone apeece".

16 Ibid.p.45.

17 Ibid.p.60.

18 Ibid.p.83.

19 Ibid.p.120.

20 Ibid.p.186.

21 Ibid.p.152.

By the latter half of the 17th century all the men possessed "a member surprisingly longer than that of Europeans, so that it more resembles the organ of a young bull than that of a man".²² This description is repeated almost to the word in a 1694 account by Christoffel Langhans.²³ By the latter half of the 17th century, all the women had "long breasts...hanging loose and uncovered, and from them gave suck to the child hanging on their back."²⁴

In the travel-writing the indigenes of the Cape became "bestial folk, since they live like dumb beasts without care, from one day to the next".²⁵ As is shown by the following examples, the women became prostitutes and the men their pimps:

1655: "But the women are quite shameless, exposing themselves for a little bread or other food, even if their husbands are standing near by."²⁶

1665: "They are avid, both men and women, for ...tobacco, for which the women will even willingly let their privy part (which sometimes they cover a little) be seen by our coarse seamen who dare to demand such of them".²⁷

1677: "Since also they are extreme lovers of the noble weed nicotine or tobacco, these charming females will show an inquisitive and salacious amateur everything he may ask for, for a pipeful of tobacco".²⁸

1682: "The navel and what is below it are in their proper places, and this latter is in many cases hung over with a piece of flesh like the wattle of a turkey, and they laugh when for a scrap of tobacco they let the Dutch or Christians see it".²⁹

1686: "...This day came down four of the Natives of the Place; them (being the foulest Men that ever I saw) dancing Naked, and shaking their Privy Parts, with an offer to the Hollanders that they should lye with their wives for a bit of rolled tobacco...".³⁰

1686: "... they will not stick to prostitute themselves, or do what ever else you would have, for the least Recompence Imaginable; and of this I am an eye-witness".³¹

The above quotes serve as examples of the descriptive discourse of travel-writing³² which thus served to construct textually, as Hottentots, the indigenous herders of the Cape.

²² Raven-Hart (1971:204).

²³ Ibid.p.406.

²⁴ Ibid.p.19, 109, 241,406.

²⁵ Ibid.p.203.

²⁶ Ibid.p.35.

²⁷ Ibid.p.84.

²⁸ Ibid.p.204.

²⁹ Ibid.p.241.

³⁰ Ibid.p.308.

³¹ Ibid.p.309.

³² Coetzee (1988:15) refers to these travel-writing descriptions as the *Discourse of the Cape*.

Descriptive Discourse

For narrative or descriptive discourse to achieve explanation or to convey an understanding, it must appeal to some formula or image (Thornton, 1984:22). As explained above the European collective imagination, by the 17th century, had a long tradition of created images. But an understanding is always partial, and cannot be achieved except through a connection with something else. To what then were Europe's images of Africa connected?

The notion of nationalism is important in terms of an idea of "a collective notion identifying us". For the European imagination to conceptualise anything other than themselves, there had to exist a widely held notion of "us" as Europeans. Anderson (1983) in his book *Imagined Communities* allows for some important links to be drawn between the rise of nationalism and the "discovery" by Europeans of other cultures. Anderson's point of departure in discussing nationalism is that nationality, nation-ness as well as nationalism are "cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (1983:13). Without reiterating Anderson's long discussion on the origins of nationalism, there are a few important points that I want to include here. He cites the 18th century as the time when communities began to imagine themselves as such, as nations.

Nation-ness is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow -members, meet them or even hear of them, "yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1983:15). Regardless of actual inequality and exploitation, the nation is always conceived as "a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1983:16). Nationalism, and the ability of communities to perceive themselves as nations, should be understood through alignment with the large cultural systems that preceded this imaginative phenomenon.

This imagining was only possible when three fundamental cultural conceptions lost their axiomatic grip on Europeans' minds. These concepts were:

1. that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was understood to be inseparable from that truth³³
2. the belief that society was naturally organised around and under high centres, under monarchs who ruled by divine dispensation;

³³ In the European case, Latin - as the language of the Bible, therefore of God and therefore of truth - and inaccessible to all but a tiny literate elite.

3. a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, in which the origins of the world and of people were essentially identical (Anderson, 1983:40).

The impact of economic change, increasing social and scientific "discoveries", and the development of increasingly rapid communications have been cited as the factors instrumental in the division between cosmology and history (Anderson 1983). This division meant that people were beginning to see themselves as part of historical processes, rather than as instruments of God's will, and the base was thus laid for a power-battle between religion and science for ideological dominance in the 19th Century.

Of these divisive developments it is scientific "discoveries" and the development of a European understanding of the human body that are important in my discussion on European constructions of southern African herders.

Science and other brains³⁴

Science³⁵ positioned itself against religion in the battle for supremacy as the dominant ideology of bourgeois society in 19th century Europe. Through developments in science from early 17th and 18th centuries to the 19th century Darwinian concepts of evolution and natural selection, the human body became an object to be taken apart for scientific study (Lewontin *et al* 1984). With society and the world - both animate and inanimate - increasingly being seen as a machine, it was not surprising that the human body, too, would be seen as a machine to be "disarticulated to be understood and then put back together again" (Lewontin *et al*, 1984:45).

The mid-19th century saw the culmination of major changes in European world view. It was Darwin's theories on evolution that allowed the ideologues of Europe to argue that while the social order was still fixed by forces outside humanity, these forces were now distinctly the forces of nature dictating the natural order, rather than anything deistic.

As Lewontin *et al* (1984) argue, with the theory of evolution came a crucial new element in the understanding of living processes: the dimension of time. Species were not fixed immemorially but were derived from earlier, "simpler", more "primitive" forms".

³⁴ I have found Lewontin *et al* (1984) and Gould (1981) most useful in looking at this issue, and have thus used these references as the basis for this discussion.

³⁵ "Science" is sometimes taken to mean the body of scientists and the set of social institutions in which they participate, the journals, the books, the laboratories, the professional societies and academics through which individuals and their work are given currency and legitimacy. At other times "science" stands for the set of methods that are used by scientists as means for investigating the relations among things in the world, and the canons of evidence that are accepted as giving credibility to the conclusions of scientists. Yet a third meaning given to "science" is the body of facts, laws, theories and relationships concerning real phenomena that the social institutions of "science", using the methods of "science", claim to be true" (Lewontin *et al*, 1984:31).

In genetic studies from Darwin's day to the present, most of the attention directed to human behaviour has been concerned with two major themes: "the inheritance of intelligence and the inheritance of mental illness or criminality." (Lewontin *et al*, 1984:56). Biological determinism is the general name given to the theory that criminality, lack of intelligence and degeneracy is biologically inherited. It is the notion that people at the bottom are constructed of intrinsically inferior material and holds that "shared behavioural norms, and the social and economic differences between human groups - primarily races, classes and sexes - arise from inherent, inborn distinctions and that society, in this sense, is an accurate reflection of biology" (Gould, 1981:20).³⁶

This form of enquiry was based on the idea of *ranking*, which itself was a subject for debate only in that researchers were attempting to clarify how the ranking worked, and not whether it existed. Biological determinism brought in the era of a scientific search for difference, based on the need to establish this difference utterly and irrefutably - as a support for social prejudice. The project was based on perceived social, cultural and physical difference and science was called upon to justify separation. The whole aim of the study of human form in the 19th century was to establish difference, to demonstrate clearly the ranking of human groups. It was obvious to all researchers that human variation was linear and hierarchical - it was their task to show this "scientifically".

"Few biological subjects have had a more direct influence upon millions of lives" (Gould, 1981:28).

Anthropometry, the measuring of the human body, "became a search for the characters that would display the correct ranking" (Gould, 1981:86). Paul Broca, a 19th century professor of clinical surgery, and main proponent of the "intelligence is measured by brain size" thesis, explained the aims of ethnology by including this: "to determine the relative positions of races in the human species" (Gould, 1981:86).

Samuel George Morton's contribution to science was his collection of more than one thousand skulls and his quantification of the differential cranial capacity of the "separate races" he was studying (Gould 1981). While blacks generally occupied the lowest ranked positions in terms of social prejudice and its concomitant scientific proof, Hottentots slotted into the lowest "black position". Morton's comments on the Hottentots:

³⁶ It was this insistence on the immutable nature of biological determinism that led to the growth of the eugenics movement, the abuse of contraceptive sterilisation, and to ideas of racial purity which found their ultimate realisation in Hitler's Germany. See for example Davis (1982) for a discussion on the eugenics movement and sterilisation in the USA.

"the nearest approximation to the lower animals...Their complexion is a yellowish brown, compared by travellers to the peculiar hue of Europeans in the last stages of jaundice...The women are represented as even more repulsive in appearance than the men".³⁷

There are endless examples of the racism inherent in the arguments of the 19th and early 20th century scientists, including Georges Cuvier's comments on his memory of Saartje Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus":³⁸

"She had a way of pouting her lips exactly like what we have observed in the orang-utan. Her movements had something abrupt and fantastical about them, reminding one of those of the ape. Her lips were monstrously large [those of the apes are thin and small as Cuvier apparently forgot]. Her ear was like that of many apes, being small, the tagus weak and the external border almost obliterated behind. These are animal characters. I have never seen a human head more like an ape than that of this woman" (in Gould, 1981:86).

The "Hottentot Venus" is referred to again in Gould's assessment of Broca's ratio of radius-to-humerus measurements. Broca's theory was that a higher ratio makes a longer forearm, a distinct characteristic of apes, but his measurements showed that the Hottentot Venus had the lowest ratio. He abandoned this criteria for ranking. Broca's guiding principle, as amongst most of the 19th century scientists and anatomists (eg. Georges Cuvier, Charles Lyell, Charles Darwin, Louis Agassiz), was that "size of brain records intelligence and that comfortable white males have larger brains than women, poor people and lower races" (Gould, 1981:89).

The intertwining of science and society is clear, where social belief in a set hierarchy, ordained by God, found their expression in scientific proof, based on Nature. Nature became the substitute for God, with science as the medium through which this shift materialised. Science thus served not only to "prove" what existed in the European imagination about Africa, but it has served to perpetuate this imagination on the grounds of "fact".

Thus, by the end of the 19th century, a scientific image of the *Hottentot* had been constructed which served to reinforce the early images constructed through the travel literature. It was this "scientific" approach that constructed Hottentots as *specimens* and informed the collection of Hottentot bodies for examination and display in museums.

Images and Icons

The creation of images and icons, and the practise of appeal to the imagination, are central to a discussion on the creation of cultural "others" by Europeans. Thornton (1984) discusses this in relation to ethnographic text. His central theme is the practise of *classification* in ethnographic writing. It is through the notion of "social wholes", as

³⁷ Quoted in Gould (1981:56).

³⁸ See Chapter 7 for more detail on "The Hottentot Venus".

the hallmark of anthropology that classification is employed. Thornton argues the idea of "social wholes" as a necessary fiction for ethnographic writing - "that the apparent wholeness of a society has more to do with the manifest and concrete wholeness of the text that is itself constructed from parts" (1984:4). Disparate observations, by virtue of being headed, sub-headed and chaptered, are imagined to be a whole, a resolution. It is thus not the society as observed that is whole, but the construction from its parts into a text.³⁹

The discourse of ethnographic writing is such that the ethnographies can pretend to be comprehensive. "The outline of chapter headings is often designed to suggest exhaustive coverage, like a catalogue or an encyclopaedia" (Thornton, 1984:24). Using this as a basis I argue that in the travel writing, and in the Hottentot ethnographies based on this literature, the "manners-and-customs" types of descriptions (Pratt 1986) set a standard such that if the areas covered by this classificatory framework were the basis of the text, then the image created would be one of "wholeness", of completeness, of exhaustive coverage. If the "comprehensiveness" of a text is accepted, then the text becomes the established truth of the society - "the text, rather than the society, becomes the object of knowledge" (Thornton, 1984:25).

The corpus of travel writing about the Hottentots relies on the repetition of categories, with the same information being repeated throughout in the various texts. The constant appearance of these "facts" was probably enough to establish it as "truth", but as further support, given the established categories, it is likely that the mere formatting of the text into such categories raised the status of the text to "truth". "Classificatory trope refers to an imagined whole in order to assert that the parts compose it. If the imagination of the whole is achieved, then classification appears to the reader as simply the technical means for marshalling the evidence" (Thornton, 1984:7).

Darkness, Idleness

Coetzee (1988:2) describes how Africa, in the European imagination, could never be the home of earthly paradise, because Africa was not a new world. With the Myth of Eden, and notions of a "return to innocence", inspiring much European exploration of other parts of the world (and Africa and the Cape being very definitely "Old World") the future promised by the Cape as the very tip of Africa could only be represented in terms

³⁹ Thornton argues that "society can not be experienced except through the text, without which the concepts of wholeness, function, power and history (among others) would certainly not be demonstrable and would probably be intellectually untenable" (1984:10). I could only agree with this if he is referring to the ethnographic society as a textualised object - the ethnographic society as such only exists through the text, and can thus only be experienced through its textual representation.

of the "degeneration of man into brute" (Coetzee 1988:3). The Cape and Africans were not seen to hold the promise of earthly paradise.⁴⁰

Inhabitants of Africa increasingly were evoked as the icon of the threat of *darkness*, where once the colonising project had begun, indigenes were constructed not as a political threat, but as a moral threat, with Africa as the opposite of Eden, an "anti-garden" (Coetzee, 1988:3). Coetzee refers to the first European perceptions of the American indigenes, speculating that they were seen as "man in his state of original innocence", a model to his fallen Old World brethren (1988:2).⁴¹ However, the image of the indigenes of the Americas as the noble savage could not have lasted for too long. Anderson refers to the "policy on barbarians" as elucidated by an "early 19th century liberal - Pedro Fermin de Vargas":

"Their idleness, stupidity, and indifference towards normal human endeavours causes one to think that they came from a degenerate race which deteriorates in proportion to the distance from its origin ... It would be very desirable that the Indians be extinguished, by miscegenation with the Whites..." (1983:21).⁴²

In such terms it was thus not a return to innocence that the Cape promised, but rather a degeneration of "man into brute", with visitors warning again and again that European settlers were declining into the "idle and brutish state of the Hottentot" (Coetzee, 1988:3). If visitors were warning about the degenerative possibilities of proximity to the Hottentots, there would have been considerable pressure on the settlers to present the Hottentots as brutishly as possible, to set up supposedly irrefutable systems of difference. There would have been a constant vigilance (mostly likely sub-conscious) on the part of the settlers to set up this system using imagery, icons, notions, myths. For the protection of settlers, systems of difference had to be established - and this took the form of an iconography of the Hottentot Brute against which the sophistication of the settler could be posed. The greater the fear of degeneration into the "anti-garden" and the greater the need for legitimising the colonisation of Africa,⁴³ the more extreme the systems of difference became, the more brutish the Hottentots became, the more *distinct* the construction of the Hottentot Other became.

Producing the Other

Pratt (1986), in her article *Scratches on the Face of the Country; or, What Mr Barrow saw in the Land of the Bushmen*, analyses how the Bushmen were "othered" - constructed

⁴⁰ Although most travel-writers saw the Hottentots as *brutish*, others like Le Vaillant wrote about people in Africa being "pure", evoking notions of the "noble savage" and "man in a state of original innocence". But if this presentation had any sway on the contemporary European imagination, it was limited and brief.

⁴¹ Coetzee questions why this myth, the myth of the return to Eden, failed to take root with reference to the Cape (the "garden colony").

⁴² This sounds very similar to what became a standard attitude to Hottentots. It would be useful to investigate the convergence of constructions, for the descriptions of Hottentots and Indians seem almost interchangeable.

into a cultural "other" by the early travel writers (in this case the writing of Barrow). Pratt (1986:139) writes that "the people to be othered are homogenised into a collective "they", which is distilled even further into an iconic "he" - the standard adult male specimen". It is the *manners-and-customs* descriptions, always a part of travel writing, that form the basis for creating the "cultural other". These *manners-and-customs* descriptions fix the other in a timeless present (Pratt 1986).⁴⁴

It is the *manners-and-customs* portrait, as a normalising discourse, whose work it is to codeify difference. It is the project of the *manners-and-customs* discourse to create single, fixed systems of difference. One of the techniques used to naturalise the information which such portraits would have presented was to present them in an informational order that appeared natural, so that it appeared to be the task of the travel writer simply to fill the categories in with the facts and the information as they presented themselves to the writer, through this opening up of the land- and bodyscape. Through the repetition of categories, not necessarily explicit, it would have appeared as if the order of knowledge existed - it just had to be filled in.

In most of the travel writing there is very little information on encounters with indigenous people, on contact between Europeans and indigenes (Pratt 1986). There is little, if any, portrayal of interaction and dialogue. This absence is central to imperial history (Carter 1987). It is not possible for the indigenous people to hold a position from which to speak; it is not possible to occupy a space within white history. In imperialist discourse "the voices of the dominated are represented entirely by their silence, their absence" (Brantlinger, 1986:186). This has been defined as conventional silence "in a discourse that effaces the European and displaces the African" (Pratt, 1986:146), where "discoveries" of places are reduced to landscape and the inhabitants reduced to bodyscape. This exscribing of people from the landscape⁴⁵ can be described as "verbal depopulation" - it is as if the *manners-and-customs* portraits are the textual homelands of the indigenes in the travel writing (Pratt 1986).⁴⁶

It is from these textual homelands that the other is pulled out of time, to be preserved, contained, studied, admired, detested, pitied, mourned (Pratt 1986). In Barrow's writing the landscape is centred as he does everything possible to minimise all human presence. The speaking and experiencing self is effaced from descriptions of the landscape, in the same way as the observer is effaced from the ethnographic portraits. Few or no

⁴³ See Brantlinger (1986).

⁴⁴ See some of the quotes from Raven-Hart (1967, 1971) in this chapter for examples of this.

⁴⁵ This can be linked to Coetzee's analysis of pastoral art, that disallowed because of its function, the portrayal of the other (other than white) in the art forms, except as a "shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then to hold a horse or serve a meal" (Coetzee, 1988:5).

⁴⁶ See also van Wyk Smith (1988).

personal contacts are described. The travel writer merely records then whatever presents itself (Pratt, 1986:142-3).

"History has a historical horizon which is constituted by the activity of history itself: the horizon of writing" (Carter, 1987:326).

Given this, it is endemic that cultural others are excluded both from white space and from white history. It is the very fact that others attempt to speak the colonial language that they are written into historical silence - as it is the writer who sets out the terms of any exchange (Carter 1987). The power of naming resided absolutely with the writers - it scarcely mattered whether the indigenous name given a place was real or not, for it was the colonists who decided if the name would be kept. Carter identifies the constitutional inability of imperial history to engage the colonised, to recognise the possibility of a different history, identifying language as the main factor (1987:332). The traditional description of much of the content of indigenous testimony as referring to "myths", "legends", and "superstitions", is a reflection of the poverty of a world view which cannot entertain the logic of other worlds (Carter, 1987:335).

Imperial History: space, place and names

Travel-writers were thus the principal producers of the iconography of the other. Carter (1987) writes an interpretation of imperial history based on the writing of explorer-travellers. He argues that it is "the act of language that brought a living space into being and rendered it habitable, a place that could be communicated, a place in which communication could take place" (1987:144). Similarly the idea of a *bodyscape* (Pratt 1986) could be interpreted in terms of the act of language that makes a body a place to be communicated. The main discourse of this travel writing reflects the position of dominance of the writer. The landscape "opens up" before the writer in the same way as the unclothed body of the indigenous other opens up. Pratt (1986) demonstrates how these descriptions so often begin with the body as the scene, and with the genitals as the crucial site in the bodyscape. It is a "non-interventionist eye/I" (Pratt 1986) that scans the landscape and the bodyscape of the other in travel writing.

Carter defines his history as a "spatial history", the history of "choosing directions, applying names, imagining goals, inhabiting the country" (1987:xxvi). Spatial history draws on its own literature of, for example, letters, journals and maps. He examines the process of making space *place*, and the intentions of the traveller/writer to transform space into place by writing it, by naming it, by defining it, and thereby bounding it. Such

spatial history begins and ends in language, "not in a particular year nor in a particular place, but in the act of naming" (1987:xxiv).⁴⁷

It is as if describing, codeifying and writing down gives a coherence bound by the possibility of ownership that describing allows the travel writer or coloniser - whether this description-based ownership be of the landscape or the bodyscape. The act of settling (in my argument, both body and land) was not a matter of marking out boundaries that already existed, but rather a process of establishing symbolic enclosures (Carter, 1987:168). Exploration served to "civilise the country" by translating it into the explorer's language, into a text "whereby rendering it of interest to the reader" as a cultural object that the reader will desire (Carter, 1987:82). Again, this would apply to the bodyscape, with imperialist description working as prescription as to how the other body would be perceived.

The power of Naming

The power of naming and written description in extending control over the indigenes of the Cape is usefully applied to the idea of the *Bodyscape*. In a different context, but nevertheless an expression of the same sentiment of control, is the above-quoted passage from Anderson (1983) on American Indians. By wishing the Indians exterminated through miscegenation, and by carrying this out, colonisers were expressing ultimate control of the body as object, the body of the other, through impregnating "savage women" with "purifying European semen". The women of these groups would have been the medium through which the colonisation of others was carried out.

I have found Dworkin's analysis (1981) useful in helping to draw links between male supremacist ideology and imperialism. The first tenet of male supremacist ideology is the belief that men have this self that women, by definition, must lack. The self-sustaining actuality of this self is expressed in "the absolute right to take whatever it needs to sustain itself" (Dworkin, 1981:14). The idea is that taking is the immutable right of the male. It is the taking that gives this self its substance, its form, its existence. Taking, for males, is the act that defines the self:

"Self is incrementally expanded as the parasite drains self from those not entitled to it" (Dworkin, 1981:p.14).

⁴⁷ Critical of traditional histories, and of the new histories that claim to write history "for the Aborigines", Carter discusses the limits of imperialist history in terms of writing, language and naming. There exists great potential for similar studies to be done in the South African context.

The analogy with imperialism is clear, and it is not difficult to argue in these terms that imperialism represents the ultimate expression of male-supremacist ideology - the imperialising power as the self, entitled to take at will (in fact being defined as the imperialising power through the act of taking).

Another main tenet of male supremacist ideology is male physical strength, mythologised and mystified such that women are "cowed by its legend as well as its reality" (Dworkin, 1981:14-15). The power of physical strength combines with the power of self so that not only are males stronger, and they take, but they take by force. Again, the colonisation and oppression of Africa can be seen in the framework of male power. The third main tenet of male supremacist ideology is the power of naming (Dworkin 1981). This power enables men to define experience, to articulate boundaries and values, to designate to each thing its realm and qualities, to determine what can and cannot be expressed, to control perception itself.

The ethnographic literature embodies in its authoritative language the workings of male supremacist ideology. One of the ways in which this is done is through the description of bodies. In Dworkin's terms this literature could be said to be pornographic in that pornography can be seen as an expression of male power through the ability of men to control the perception of women's bodies (Dworkin 1981). Travel-writers invariably described the Hottentots according to an inarticulated, but very present framework of categories, and Coetzee (1988), for example, tops his list of 19 descriptive categories with *physical description*. Through the act of description, the naming, and particularly through the focus on describing genitalia, the colonising project colonised the bodies not only of subject women. All bodies were colonised and demonstrated to be subject. Dworkin again assists in drawing this link when she states the the male "through each and every one of his institutions, forces the female to conform to his supremely ridiculous definition of her as sexual object. He fetishises her body as a whole and in its parts" (1981:22).

The link I make here is with the fetishising of parts of the Hottentot body. Particularly fetishised in the travel-literature was the body of Hottentot women - the Hottentot *apron*, and women's breasts. Men's bodies were also fetishised through descriptions of Hottentot male genitalia (*one testicle, large penis*). Controlling the body image, essentially of the bodyscape, is a form of domination and control, a form of sexual, cultural and economic imperialism.

Imperialism was inherently an expression of male power, of the power of European men, against which all other power was juxtaposed and defined. Everything else becomes an other next to power (power as that force/ those "freedoms" wielded by

European men). If power was European male force/wish, then the oppressed, colonised people were treated from the same standpoint as European men treated European women (though with a lot less "delicacy").⁴⁸ The colonised were manipulated, defined, eroticised, sexualised, named, shaped at will and whim. Similar sentiments informed both the oppression of European women and of the oppressed: We are men because of what we possess and our strength to use it at will. We, through this, possess the power to define you in terms that will clearly demonstrate our power over you. The sexualising of the oppressed (be they women/colonised/colonised women) is an expression of male power.

Master Myths

The notion of *myth* is important in this analysis, and many myths were functional in the production of Africa, touching deepseated cultural and religious chords in the European imagination. For example, there exists the myth of the *dark continent*, the creation myth and the figure of Adamastor, and the frontier myth and the Hottentot Eve. Africa, as a rule, has been described in terms of creation and dark forces.⁴⁹

Coetzee's literary analysis offers a complementary perspective on this icon. In his introductory discussion he looks at the continuing search for a language in which Africa can be made to speak to its readers, a language in which to win Africa, to speak Africa, to represent Africa. When the landscape was finally made to speak, it did so in the form of a monster or giant, breathing wordlessly on all below it (Coetzee 1988).

The myth of Adamastor is important in that it served as the iconographic code in which Africa was cast. It was the "white man's creation myth of Africa, ultimately derived from classical sources and applied to explain his initial experience of the black continent" (Gray, 1979:15). This mythical figure, Adamastor, was created by Luis de Camoens, the first European poet to record his experience of sailing around the Cape. Adamastor is described by Gray (1979) as being an old greybeard born of earth and sky, a ham-handed oaf, the home of the numerous unenlightened who are tragic because their aspirations toward civilisation have failed.

If the motivation of this myth was to codeify, to identify and to name, it was another myth that was evoked in order to define experience (Gray 1979). This is the frontier myth - which still persists today, in the continuing frontier mentality evident in white South African social formations. The very existence of a frontier myth expresses an

⁴⁸ While the colonisation of "other" womens' bodies would have been qualitatively different from the colonisation of "other" mens' bodies, and from the sexualising of European women, my argument (and I have certainly simplified and generalised the issue above) is that the colonisation of all others' bodies would have been a natural extension of the imperialising project.

⁴⁹ Gray (1979); Coetzee (1988).

interdependence, an "involvement across barriers" (Gray, 1979:38). The act of establishing boundaries and frontiers is the act of separating settler from other. The act of enclosure, of defining boundaries, permeated the entire structure of settler society, as it was only once boundaries had been established (physical or cultural) that the settlers had a *place* from which to speak (Carter 1987). The frontier would signify the exclusion of all that was not "us", was not culturally familiar - but the frontier served to exclude even when it included. For, as Carter states, "the act of incorporation involves the complete silencing and obliteration of whatever it was that made the frontier necessary in the first place" (1987:158).

The settler construct of *inland* - with its concomitant mysteries and dangers (of all types including miscegenation), necessitated the erection of a boundary, the frontier - as a cultural construct. The "essential function of the boundary is to facilitate communication" (Carter, 1987:158). In South Africa, the frontier myth has an original and persistent go-between - the *Hottentot Eve* (Gray 1979). "Her presence on the frontier lends the myth a quality of potential interchange, since she, as pastoral ambassadress, temptress, mediator and, ultimately, miscegenator, comes to symbolise both the attractions and the intractabilities of inland" (Gray, 1979:38-39).⁵⁰

The Authority of Myth

Mythology is "discourse which treats its subject as universally accepted, scientifically established, and therefore no longer open to criticism by a political or theoretical opposition" (Brantlinger, 1986:187). The travel-writing about Cape herders functions as myth in these terms. In this chapter I have discussed the techniques used by travellers to establish their reports as "truth", as authoritative, particularly in the use of *categories* of knowledge. It should be clear from *Construction One* in Chapter Three that the imagery and iconography of the corpus of travel-writing has been used as "universally accepted" and "scientifically established" fact about the Cape herders for hundreds of years.

The manner in which the Hottentot has been an object of study to be named, defined and shaped by the authoritative voice of scientific study is still reflected in popular presentations of herders. The manner in which cultural others are constructed into displayable objects is part of the dynamic between knowledge, power and the maintenance of authoritative voice that, in the case of herders, finds its roots in travel-writing and is still perpetuated in the discourse of authority. This happens particularly

⁵⁰ It is because the *Hottentot Eve* is a manifestation of the "white man's feelings about the interior", that she changes her shape and effect with the differing pressures of the Hottentots as a political factor in the course of South African history (Gray 1979).

in museums where the purpose of museums is the display of objects. In the case of the herders, the Hottentot construction began as the construction of a displayable object.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOTTENTOTS AND OTHER OBJECTS

"The essence of oppression is that one is defined from the outside by those who define themselves as superior by criteria of their own choice." (Andrea Dworkin, 1981:149)

"One of racism's salient historical features has always been the assumption that white men - especially those who wield economic power - possess an incontestable right of access to Black women's bodies." (Angela Davis, 1982:175)

"Women have been largely man-made" Eva Figs¹

beautiful a. delighting the eye or ear; gratifying any taste; morally or intellectually impressive, charming or satisfactory. Concise Oxford English Dictionary

display v.t. exhibit; expose to view; show; show ostentatiously; reveal; betray; allow to appear

Concise Oxford English Dictionary

object n. 1. thing placed before eyes or presented to one of the senses; material thing

2. person or thing of affecting, especially pitiable or ridiculous, appearance

3. person or thing to which action or feeling is directed

4. thing aimed at, end, purpose

5. (Philos.) thing thought of or apprehended as correlative to the thinking mind or subject, external thing; the non-ego. Concise Oxford English Dictionary

view 1. n. inspection by eye or mind, survey

2. power of seeing, range of vision, what is seen, scene, prospect; picture etc. representing this

3. intention, design

4. on -: being on show (for inspection)

5. have in -: have as one's object

6. v.t. survey with the eyes; survey mentally, form mental impression or judgement of. Concise Oxford English Dictionary

Authoritative voice is deeply embedded in colonial history. It has been used in all the forms in which this history is made public. In fact, it is inherent in the structure of the discipline of History. I have examined the voice of museums, and I have examined the way in which authoritative versions of herder history have been constructed. I examine

¹ Quoted in Belsey and Moore (eds) (1989:4).

in this chapter the way in which authoritative voice speaks about Hottentots, particularly in museums.

The process whereby Hottentots became textualised as displayable objects is integrally linked to male power and to the construction generally of human bodies as objects.

There cannot exist a neutral approach to texts (documents, objects, artefacts in Foucauldian sense²), as all reading is interpretation and all interpretation is political. This is so in that "specific ways of reading inevitably militate for or against the process of change" (Belsey and Moore, 1989:1). For example, feminist readers set out, most commonly, to assess "how the text invites its readers as members of a specific culture, to understand what it means to be a woman or a man, and so encourages them to reaffirm or to challenge existing cultural norms" (Belsey and Moore, 1989:1).

Hottentot texts (or textualised Hottentots) invite readers to understand what it means to be a Hottentot. On the surface this is the insight that readers of these texts believe they are gaining. But textual constructions,³ serving to distance the reader from the object and the author from subjectivity, are functionally complex. However, these texts, though complex in effect, basically work in an oppositional way. Readers come to know what it is to be a Hottentot by the constant reinforcement, and thereby the security, of knowing, experientially, what it is not to be a Hottentot. The assumption, and often the explicit implication, is that the Hottentot is everything bad posed against "us", who represent everything good. The Hottentot is defined by "us", according to how we define "ourselves". We could not be defined adequately without a Hottentot, and a Hottentot only gains meaning or appropriate objectification when posed against an "us". Secondly, because of the oppositional nature of the construction, Hottentots do serve essentially to reinforce, in European culture, what it means to be a woman or a man, encouraging readers to reaffirm existing norms. Hottentots were constructed to represent what it meant to be an outcast in terms of European gender-stereotypes. What it meant to be a man or a woman had a natural equation with what it meant to be masculine or feminine, both physically and socially.

But anatomy is not the source of gender difference. Rather anatomy is the representation of this difference ie. gender differentiation is not because of anatomy - anatomy merely represents culturally defined gender differentiation (Belsey and Moore, 1989:5-6). The physical body is interpreted according to culturally defined "systems of difference". This provides the clue to the Hottentot texts, the objectification of the Hottentot body, the Hottentot body as object. The perceived anatomy of the Hottentots came to represent a culturally defined sexuality in a double sense - that of the

² Foucault (1972).

Hottentots, and that of the Europeans, by opposition. Once sexuality and anatomy could be directly linked (anatomy as the source of sexual difference), and the anatomy had been constructed in the most bestial image, the sexuality became bestial and the bestiality became innately genetic. Because of the bestial sexuality, the anatomy became an object for scientific investigation, an object of extreme curiosity, with certain parts of the body being explicitly connected with sexuality (ie. the oft-referred to, much objectified genitals and buttocks, the "peculiarities" of both men and women). This circularity of argument is characteristic of European men's justification of their sexual power as a base for their total power.⁴

Objectification

"Objectification describes the inevitable process by which all expression, conscious or unconscious, social or individual, takes specific form. It is only through the giving of form that something can be conceived of" (Miller, quoted in Hall 1990a:8).

A feminist definition of objectification is:

"that fixed response to the form of another that has as its inevitable consequence erection...Objectification ... denotes who or what the male loves to hate; who or what he wants to possess, act on, conquer, define himself in opposition to; where he wants to spill his seed... the primary target of objectification is the woman" (Dworkin, 1981:113).

This means in practise that all women are objectified in response to a relative ideal of beauty where men "perpetually searching to justify their perpetual search for objects that move them to experience their own desire transmuted to power, claim especially to love beauty as such." Objectification is thus, under the guise of devotion to an aesthetic, presented as the recognition of the beautiful (Dworkin, 1981:115).⁵ Only some women fit the established (but ever-changing) ideal of beauty. It is impossible to attain the ideal of beauty, for the ideal becomes such through its rarity ie. the object's beauty is in its rarity.⁶ The rarity then becomes the criterion for beauty, with the effect that rarity/beauty become conflated.⁷ (This is particularly pertinent to museum display, the display of the "rare and beautiful". In museum terms these notions are almost synonymous.)

It is probable that Hottentot women were perceived by Europeans to have an "inappropriate" sexuality - for example, the travel-writing references to the women who would "display themselves for as little as a finger of tobacco, *even* in front of their

³ such as the *manners-and-customs* descriptions of the travel-writing, or the realistic presentations of bodies in museums.

⁴ See Dworkin (1981).

⁵ Dworkin argues that most women understand objectification at an unfortunately superficial level ie. that beauty is rewarded and lack of beauty is punished, without understanding that they are also punished through sexual use for being beautiful (1981:118).

⁶ See Firestone (1972).

⁷ It is possible that now that Bushmen/Hottentots are perceived as rare/extinct, the space can be opened up for a portrayal of these groups as "beautiful", as "children of nature" - beautiful people that represent an existence that while not necessarily desired, is certainly idealised - see newsclips in Appendix A.

husbands". Inappropriate behavior thus disqualified them from being seen as beautiful. Dworkin (1981) provides a framework for this by positing that an object "must be that which it is meant to be" - that the behavior of an object must be appropriate to its function. Simply - women must behave like women. And women are those people who have been defined in terms of a "womanhood" described by men. The one unchanging standard of female beauty as that "the woman must conform to the male's definition of her as an object with respect to function as well as form" (Dworkin, 1981:116). In the terms set by European men, Hottentot women did not conform.

However, it was more likely the sexuality of the male herders to which European men reacted. Dworkin's argument, which is particularly useful in its exemplifying the links between sexism and racism, culminates in demonstrating how men need to portray women as nothing in order to justify the conquest of other men. The argument is related to an example of a pornographic photo-essay. The scene depicted is a Mexican jail, with an imprisoned American male, a Mexican jailer (male) and a Mexican women come to visit her jailed lover. I quote at length:

"the sexuality of the white male is depicted as superior in sensitivity. The sexuality of the Mexican male is depicted as superior in terms of brute sexual force. The racially degraded male is, in fact, consistently depicted in this fashion; his alleged sexual nature, being brute and thus bestial is precisely what licenses violence against him in a racist value system. His sexuality is a savage masculinity, while the phallus of the white carries civilization to the dark places. This is the nexus of sex and race. If women really amount to nothing, are worth nothing, then the conquest of them - except for the momentary pleasure of it - means nothing, proves nothing ... It cannot sustain a sense of masculine superiority because the conquest of nothing is nothing. But the conquest of other men, especially men with a more massive, more brute sexuality does amount to something. It is sustaining because the conquest of bigger, better cock is the ultimate conquest" (Dworkin, 1981:157).

In the European colonising discourse, both Hottentot men and women are sexualised and fetishised. The men, bearers of huge members and wearing only skins, enter the European imagination as naked, savage, sexual. The fear of exposure of the naked penis in the (male-defined) European imagination, justifies their figurative castration (they only have one testicle) and their literal destruction, their total colonisation by European men. Native men were seen by male European colonists as threatening, savage, sexually barbaric - as a group of men from whom "lily-white" settler women supposedly had to be protected at all costs. American parallels to this can be found in the extreme violence of lynching - one of the treatments meted out to black men (perceived, through the "myth of the black rapist", to be a sexual threat).⁸

Gilman (1986) makes reference to the detailed discussion of female genitalia in 19th century scientific anatomical texts - the discussion of the genital "peculiarities" of black

⁸ See Davis (1982).

women, especially Hottentot women. He compares this focus to the complete absence of discussion on male genitalia.

The lack of presentation of male genitalia (in comparison to the focus on female genitalia) could be linked to an idea that it is in the penis that power is vested. The penis is the site of power, the sight of which would serve to demythologise and thereby weaken male power. The idea of male power is communicated through the "hidden".⁹

Display

The construction of museum epistemology is unique in that the work of museums is centred around objects.¹⁰ The sets of objects on display in museums are sustained by the myth that the set somehow constitutes a coherent and representational universe. Artefacts are assembled, ordered and presented to make a particular sense to the viewing visitor (Shanks and Tilley 1987). But the display artists do not have total control over meaning. It is debatable whether those who control museums have the power to shape the mind of viewers/visitors as opposed to viewers/visitors making sense of the displays through prior perceptions brought to the museum. As Durrans says (1988:155): "So little is known about how museums influence their public relative to people's prior assumptions and the impact of other media".

The "ideology as false consciousness" position would have it that those in power are "clever enough" to fool "the public" into believing what they are shown or told. Both Frankfurt and Althusserian Marxism share a common view of the public, and the working class in particular, as automatons unable to escape the "ideological state apparatuses". The notion that the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas has been challenged with the argument that the ruling ideology has served mainly to unify the dominant class. In the latter argument the ideas of the ruling class are exactly that, while the masses have been controlled by the cruder mechanisms of physical coercion and economic incentives (Callinicos 1983). So while museum personnel may be regarded as traditional intellectuals in the Gramscian sense,¹¹ and authoritative in their positions, they are not the only group who create meaning around objects.

The power of a museum display is meaning. A display will mean something to every viewer - even in that it may mean "nothing", this negativity carries an understanding in itself. Each viewer's perception and understanding of a display, while possibly being

⁹ See Dworkin (1981), Firestone (1972).

¹⁰ See Hooper-Greenhill (1985).

¹¹ See Simon (1982).

generally the same, will have its own subjective incorporation (male/female/child/adult). The strength of an object, an object on display, is in its allowing a multiplicity of meanings, regardless of the accompanying text (whether written or spoken).

Objects that survive do so by virtue of existing mental constructs, an existing subjectivity, a framework of understanding in which each viewer perceives the object in relation to themselves. Experience is culturally mediated, and subjective identification occurs within a text and within a context. We make sense of ourselves in relation to objects, to a past. We understand ourselves subjectively in relation to a text, a document, a photograph.

Arguing that a text has a single meaning - that intended by the author - eliminates the possibility of a reader's subjective interpretation (Belsey 1980). Objects displayed can support multiple texts (related to the complex workings of ideology) - in that all display authors and viewers construct different meanings around the same object (although there would still be an identifiable dominant display discourse that can be seen to change over time with changing political discourse).

The Bushmen body casts at the South African Museum in Cape Town, for example, have meant different things to different people for different reasons. For example, to Peringuey, the Director of the South African Museum who initiated the cast project in 1905 in order to collect the "most accurate records of a supposedly dying race" (Summers, 1975:103), these casts meant the collection of a physical archive, the collection of an archive "recording the physical appearance of the Bush people" (Summers, 1975:119). The capture of bodies, in this sense, was quite consistent with the collection project of 19th century science. This "other", once collected, was then recycled into display. To viewers, the casts on display have meant, variously, the presentation of physical "types" and the presentation of an "other" way of life. The casts have been physical representatives of the Stone Age, and have represented "children of nature" living in pristine and idealised isolation.

The *cast* thus becomes the central immovable object, in that different meaning has been brought to the same casts in different contexts. The continuing popularity of the casts in terms of a popular focus indicates that the casts have become the central object, and it is through the casts, or on the basis of the casts, or around the casts that different stories can be told, artefacts draped, contexts constructed.

Objects on display have both a temporal and a contextual dimension. There are in most museums contextual changes in object display over periods of time. The fact that the object itself is still the same physically, emphasizes the importance of context in

developing or contributing to meaning. But mythologising happens in spite of the displays, not because of them. The main feature of contexts is that they are constructed. Whether an object is physically on display, or whether it is through popular media¹² created/constructed into a displayable object is not really what is at issue. What I would argue is at issue is construction - the process whereby objects and contexts are constructed into displayable form; and the subsequent effects of this construction on perception and understanding of the viewers/readers/consumers of the object.

The object or artefact, through the act of presentation, becomes *representation* - of a time period, is turned into a commodity and removed from the past, confirming the presents' relationship with the object world (Shanks and Tilley 1987).

The time of the past is reduced to the production of commodities of the past.¹³ Objects thus come to represent units of time, and it follows that the more objects presented the "richer" the time. In producing objects from the past, we (as archaeologists) are producing units of time, objects as signifiers of periods. The way objects are arranged in cases, as a temporal narrative, is a function of how we see time as a continuum of units (Shanks and Tilley 1987). The control of the production of objects is equivalent to the control of objects, and it is on the basis of our interpretation (as researchers) that the manner of objectification is determined. In such exhibition the objects are located by cases - cases of time and cases of archaeological period. The case space is empty time - time as a container, filled with the objects of archaeology and anthropology.

Glass Boundaries

"The frontier is usually conceived of as a line, a line continually pushed forward (or back) by heroic frontiersmen, the pioneers" (Carter, 1987:158).

This delineation, this frontier, signifies the absolute exclusion of everything that is not culturally familiar. This frontier, even when incorporating the culturally unfamiliar, still excludes it for, as stated earlier, the act of incorporation involves the complete silencing and obliteration of whatever it was that made the frontier necessary in the first place (Carter, 1987:158).¹⁴

Glass cases and museum walls are the present testimony of the delineation of frontiers, incorporating and silencing the culturally unfamiliar - that which makes necessary the glass case, in which to define the objectified cultural other.

¹² See "Agter Die Vensters" in Appendix E for further comments on this.

¹³ See Shanks and Tilley (1987) on "commodified time", where units of time are created to facilitate comparison and exchange.

¹⁴ See Chapter Six.

These glass boundaries, serving to delineate and define, also demarcate the authority of the museum. These boundaries are sanctioned by, and represent, the authority of the museum.

Cultural boundaries and how they would have been used and negotiated can never really be gained from the artefactual record. Rather, the artefacts come to represent boundaries through their objectification. Collections are used to define boundaries. Collections that become objects on display are used as boundary definitions which are exacerbated by glass, by juxtapositioning. In that collections are interpreted and presented in terms of our understanding in the present, archaeologically defined cultural boundaries come to represent the political boundaries of the present. Artefactual remains are used to negotiate difference in the present, but cannot ascertain *how* boundaries were used to negotiate difference in historically different time.

Carter's interpretation of boundaries (1987) is wholly applicable to museums: "the essential function of the boundary is to facilitate communication" enabling places (landscape and bodyscape) to appear and be named - "it enables the settler to establish who and where he is" (Carter, 1987:158). The plate glass of the display case operates as boundary, the glass delineating difference, the definitive space, allowing the visitor a sense of place from which to communicate and within which to communicate.

Carter is highly critical of the assumption that the history of oral cultures can be treated in the same manner as white history (ordered in the culture-specific discourse of History), arguing that this in itself is a form of frontier rhetoric, founded on the successful appropriation and suppression of neighbouring cultures, and effectively suppressing the difference, not only of content, but also of form, of "the past" in oral cultures (1987:160-161). The manner in which archaeologists, historians and display artists bring together a corpus of scattered oral, written and excavated data is completely foreign to an oral culture.

But "others" who have not been named, described and brought into cultural circulation can not, in any sense, be said to have been discovered and controlled, in that the act of display, as in the act of naming, is an act of control -

"... as if, for instance, a country which has not been named and brought into cultural circulation can, in any sense, be said to have been discovered" (Carter, 1987:xvii).

Dioramas of isolation

Academic writing has long focussed on what has been termed the "interdependent model" (Headland and Reid 1989) - focussed on researching a world in which simple

tribal societies, complex societies, and even states co-existed and evolved together. However, the "isolate model" (Headland and Reid 1989) is still operative in popular presentations.¹⁵

This view of "primitive isolates" has been widely presented, and still enjoys popular status in the media today.¹⁶ "Westerners have chronically failed to understand such societies because they contrive to see them as fossilized isolated hunters rather than as "commercial foragers" carrying on a life-style not in spite of but because of their particular economic role in the global world in which they live" (Headland and Reid, 1989:51).

In Southern African museums the ethnographic displays are effectively *dioramas of isolation*. These displays show groups of objectified bodies presented in pristine isolation where there is no evidence of the kind of contact that has been studied by anthropologists and archaeologists. It is possible that in South Africa, the presentation of historical isolation provides justification for separation today.¹⁷ Our boundaries in the South African present are so defined that the object cultures are presented in different museums - ie.in Cape Town, as in Grahamstown, settler culture and indigenous culture are housed in, delineated, bounded by, completely separate structures.

The displays are also *dioramas of authority*. They present the "truth about the past" in a manner that does not encourage questioning. Beautifully presented behind glass, under special-effects lighting, with neatly lettered labels, the diorama constructions become authoritative, immutable. *Diorama history*, history that continues to unfold upon a stage in the linearity of the discourse, is where the real mythologising occurs, where a point of view is invented, for a "panoramic eye before whose gaze the historical facts unfold again exactly as before" (Carter, 1987:xix). *Diorama history* defines "where the past has been settled even more effectively than the country" (Carter, 1987:xx).

Hottentots on Display

While there are few Hottentot or herder displays in South African museums, the Hottentots as a group have certainly had their share of being displayed, of being an objectified, collectable item.

¹⁵ I have in this work generalised the European perception of "primitive". I acknowledge that this is not enough as I believe we need to understand the particular forms that this othering has taken in South Africa, the difference between the other Bushman and the other Hottentot. Efforts to change the public presentation would have to be grounded on an understanding of why the current images are popular.

¹⁶ See newsclips in Appendix A.

¹⁷ This separation is manifested in legislation such as the Group Areas Act. See Omond (1985) for a review of apartheid legislation.

For example, in the 19th and early 20th century, museums were distinguished by their collections of human skeletons. Osteological remains were considered part of the fauna and flora of "discovered" countries - and amongst the most actively sought specimens were the crania of Hottentots and Bushmen (Morris 1987). "Most of these skulls were donated by or purchased from travellers who had acquired them as curiosities during their visits to southern Africa" (Morris, 1987:12). The Musee de l'Homme, in Paris, houses in its collection only one specimen accompanied by satisfactory records (Morris, 1987:15). This specimen represents the remains of "the unfortunate woman",¹⁸ Saartjie Baartman.

The Case of the Hottentot Venus¹⁹

"Most students and collectors of Africana have, I suppose, heard of the so-called "Hottentot Venus"...."(Kirby, 1949:55).

Saartjie Baartman was taken to London from the Cape in 1810 by Alexander Dunlop, who informed her that she could there make a fortune by exhibiting herself (Kirby 1949:55). In London she was "exhibited on a stage two feet high, along which she was led by her keeper, and exhibited like a wild animal; being obliged to walk, stand or sit as he ordered her" (Kirby, 1949:57). During 1814 and 1815, the "Hottentot Venus" was exhibited in Paris, daily from 11am to 10pm, where sweets were given to her "in order to induce her to leap and sing" and she was informed that she was the "prettiest woman in society" (Kirby, 1953:129-130). She was exhibited not to show her genitalia, but to display her "protruding buttock" (steatopygia), a feature of Hottentot women which apparently captured the eye of travellers,²⁰ and in the case of Saartjie, riveted European audiences.²¹

Case No. 33

Saartjie Baartman, in her presentation as the "Hottentot Venus", became the ultimate objectified woman. She was collected, displayed and objectified in every conceivable manner. French scientists, such as Georges Cuvier, conferenced around her body for three days in March 1815 (Kirby 1954). On her death in December 1815, several castings were made - of her whole body, of her genital organs, and of her anus (Kirby 1953). These castings, together with her complete articulated skeleton, are preserved in Case No.33 in the Musee de l'Homme.

¹⁸ Kirby (1949:55).

¹⁹ On Dunlop being taken to court in 1810 for exhibiting Saartjie Baartman against her will (Kirby, 1949:57-59).

²⁰ The "protruding buttocks" of Hottentot women did not find expression in the travel-writing discourse of the Cape herders - see Raven-Hart (1967, 1971).

²¹ See Fitschen (1989).

"The skeleton of "The Hottentot Venus" is in an excellent state of preservation and, placed as it is in Case No. 33 in the Museum next to the plaster cast, gives the spectator an excellent idea of her proportions" (Kirby, 1954:320).

A spectacle in life, a spectacle in death. She was drawn from four points of view, caricatured, satirised in cartoons, written about, sung about, examined, cast, articulated and preserved:

"It is ...of interest to record that in the anatomical laboratory of the museum devoted to "soft parts", both the brain and the genital organs of the "Venus" are preserved."

(Kirby, 1954:319).

Display and prostitution

The figure of Saartjie Baartman was reduced to her sexual parts, which then served as the central image for the black female, and subsequently for prostitutes, throughout the 19th century.²² Gilman (1986) presents a direct link between the iconography of Hottentots and the iconography of prostitutes as developed by 19th Century scientists. He discusses the presentation of icons in visual conventions and in the scientific discourse of the time, and explains how the representation of individuals in iconographic fashion implied the creation of some greater class or classes to which the individual was seen to belong. This resulted in stereotyping that served to focus the viewers' attention on the relationship between the individual portrayed/displayed, and the general qualities ascribed to the class (Gilman, 1986:222-223).

The myths associated with the class, the myth of difference, is composed of fragments of the real world - the tactic similar to ethnographic classification, where the portrayal of a part is suggestive of the whole.²³ In this case, the portrayal of an individual conjures up images of a whole class. Gilman explains that by the 18th century the sexuality of the "black", both male and female, had become an icon for deviant sexuality in general, and that in the 19th century, the Hottentot was firmly entrenched as the representative of the essence of the "black", especially the black female.

Many visual representations of Saartjie appeared,²⁴ and in some senses this icon is still available.²⁵ The Saartjie icon has also been perpetuated in terms of live displays - such as at the Van Riebeeck Festival, Cape Town in 1952, "where they proved an immense attraction".²⁶ In Namibia there have been moves by game park officials to employ Bushmen in game parks as gatherer-hunters, to attract tourists (Pieters, 1990:74).

²² Gilman (1986).

²³ See Chapter Six.

²⁴ See Fitschen (1989).

²⁵ See postcards in Appendix D.

²⁶ Cape Times Publication (1952:48) - see Appendix D for illustration.

Objects are displayed for their communicative function, for the way in which meaning can be structured around an object or collection of objects. The romance of the object is that it belongs to the past. The object signifies the past in a present in which the past is absent. It can only be signified, re-presented, symbolised through objects. The artefact is present, and has human presence that constitute the object's authority and authenticity. The artefactual past becomes a kind of transcript for the living presence of real people who are disturbingly absent (Shanks and Tilley 1987).

"What matters is not so much the artifact being on view as the significance of its existence, its authenticity" (Shanks and Tilley, 1987:77). Its authenticity legitimates it in its "correct" re-presentation of the past.

The South African Museum in Cape Town is the only museum in which I saw lifecasts being used in exhibits. In addition, the process of casting is explained in an adjoining exhibit, showing how the pieces of the body were transformed into pieces of cast and then articulated into a whole. It is possible that this exhibit serves to authenticate the facts of the Bushmen display, in that the bodies are shown to have been cast from living people. Another option is that this exhibit serves to dehumanise further people on display, reducing them absolutely, immutably to *bodies*. The bodies, while set in a realistic 19th century Karoo context, are nevertheless bodies, bodies as objects, objectified through display. The objects are presented as fragments of the past, the fragments are shown to be pieces of the body, the body becomes an object, and its ultimate purpose is display.

Viewer/Voyeur

"... far from being a conversation between equals, the discursive situation is more usually like the unequal relation between the coloniser and the colonised, oppressor and oppressed" (Said in Carter, 1987:328).

Shanks and Tilley (1987) argue that in display the detail and clarity of reproduction bring fascination, and a sense of being in on the act. The relation with the past based on the look of objects is a voyeuristic appreciation and a simultaneous violation of the body of the past. "So the past is revealed to the visitor, exposed and uncovered to be appreciated ... The visitor stands back ... and views" (Shanks and Tilley 1987:79-80).

The distinction between viewer and voyeur in relation to displays of bodies is a fine one. The outsider views the object, protected by established boundaries, an established discursive situation, from the implications of being a voyeur. The viewing that takes place in the space of legitimised display is devoid of voyeurism. Voyeurism is legitimised, and space is defined in which bodies can be examined at will, either as scientific examination, or as educational experience. The museum displays today have

set up a situation in which the viewer/voyeur becomes the insider, and the body, through the established boundaries, becomes the outsider, the object to be viewed and reviewed in ongoing repetition, as if in tribute to the icon of Saartjie Baartman.

The authoritative discourse of museum displays, the comfortable bounded space from within which to view objects, the way in which bodies have been constructed as displayable objects, as scientific specimens - all of this indicates that while viewers may bring their own meaning to displays, there exists a powerful discourse in museums. This discourse is exclusive, authoritative and has served science absolutely in its construction of cultural others.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

"... a progressive voice is one that has been forged."

(Muller and Cloete, 1986:15).

It has been explained that the reason for the lack of displays on pastoralism in the South African Museum in Cape Town is that the herder ethnographic collections are too limited for display.¹ Absences, in the case of public presentation, speak as loudly as the presences, and the voice that thus speaks about herders says that if there is no collection, no object past, there can be no presentation of a past. And if there is no presentation, there is no history. The ethnography of herders does not satisfy the criteria upon which ethnographic display is based, and thus if museums have been unable to collect it, the history cannot be found and thus ceases to exist. The authoritative voice of the collections assists in this manner to exclude herders from display - on the basis of a lack of authority with which to speak about herders. This voice is deeply rooted in 19th century notions of truth and science. Through this voice the "other" is simultaneously created and re-created, gaining authority by virtue of the scientific weight of the museum.

The power of the authoritative voice, and the weight behind popular presentations of herder history, disallows the icon of *Hottentot* to be done away with by simply changing a label, or by archaeologists continuing to investigate herder history in the traditional academic manner. I argue that simple re-presentations of *Hottentot* as *Khoi-Khoi* will not function effectively to change the *Hottentot* icon.

Initially my whole study was directed towards examples of "popularised" herder studies. Through the process of my research I have moved more towards looking at the knowledge/power dynamic upon which such studies are based. The main reason for this shift in focus is that I steadily became more concerned with the power wielded by academics - as researchers and as participants in/ perpetrators of academic discourse. The popular presentations of herders (as *Hottentots* and as *Khoi-Khoi*) are all based on the academic literature, and it is through this dependency that many of the perceptions and interpretations, derived through academic research, are perpetuated.

¹ Gerald Klinghardt, Anthropology Department, South African Museum, Cape Town: pers.comm.1989.

Thus an understanding of the academic texts and discourse on the herders seemed the essential starting point towards changing popular presentations. In this sweeping term (academic texts and discourse), I include not only the archaeological and museum texts produced in 20th century South Africa, but the scientific textual discourse of the 19th century, and the travel-writing of the 18th and 17th centuries.

The 1986 Goodwin Series, Volume 5, titled *Prehistoric Pastoralism in Southern Africa* is thought by the editors to "provide a good representation of the current status of herder studies in Southern Africa" (Hall and Smith, 1986:3). It has as its stated purpose "to bring together current studies of early livestock herding" (Hall and Smith, 1986:3). Although pastoralist sites are almost ubiquitously ephemeral, which indicates problems for investigating precolonial and colonial period pastoralism, studies have been conducted from many angles. These have focussed on, for example,

"Khoi and San relationships",² "herder-hunter contact zones",³ and "domestic animals in the rock art of Southern Africa".⁴

One of the notable points about archaeological studies of pastoralism is the oft-used reference to, and reliance upon, the travel-writing. It is through this reliance that I have drawn the links between the early travel-writing, archaeological studies and popular presentations, and it is because the travel-writing functions as the central interpretative source on the herders that I have focussed on the popular icons derived from this literature. The archaeological studies are almost absent in most popular presentations, and it is thus mostly the discourses of imaginative travel-writing that still inform popular belief.

It is, as Klein (1986:6) points out, that "contemporary European accounts of the Khoi lack ethnographic objectivity and thoroughness, and many important aspects of Khoi Culture and Ecology cannot be reliably reconstructed from published sources." He goes on to argue that, given the above, only archaeology can determine the origins and antiquity of herder culture.

But reference is made all the way through the Goodwin series volume to early travel-writing:

"Early travellers describe some local breeds of domesticates" (Voigt, 1986:16).

"...there are several reports by early travellers of "Hottentots" using skin containers to curdle milk" (Manhire et al, 1986:25).

"...information from early traveller's reports show that large numbers of cattle and sheep were pastured around St. Helena Bay" (Smith, 1986:38).

² Smith (1986).

³ Sampson (1986).

⁴ Manhire et al. (1986).

"Historical sources fill in the space between the archaeological record and other models of herder adaptation discussed here" (Smith, 1986:38).

My analysis situates the ethnographic/travel-writing such that, without calling the whole corpus into question as a basis for "facts" about pastoralists, I have been able to highlight the discourse of travel-writing and the way in which the ethnographies constructed societies/ groups/ oppressed/ women. For the above reasons I have not looked closely at the archaeologies but have rather pulled out a sense of the importance of the early ethnographies in the process of producing herder archaeologies. Archaeologists, through our research, are currently producing *herders* or *pastoralists*. These groups are sometimes represented as *Khoi* (see quotations above), but generally the archaeology exists as digging the *herders*. In a move away from what is seen as the "racist" presentation of *Hottentots*, archaeologists have attempted to distance themselves from participating in the *Hottentot* stereotype. However, as stated above, popular perceptions are based on icons weighted by centuries of myth-making, and few popular presentations rely on the supposedly less image-loaded archaeological knowledge about *herders*. It is still *Hottentots* that constitute the popular icon, still *Hottentots* that are on display.

At the same time, though, while the *Hottentots* are still textually available to readers, and are surely still present in the imagination of much of South Africa's population, they are being replaced by the textualised *Khoi-Khoi*. But as no living groups are loudly proclaiming herder ancestry, herders appear to be a group that can be shaped and constructed according to those who write them. As academic researchers we retain the power and authority to write, and thus to construct and textualise as we see fit.

The precolonial gatherer-hunters have remained largely "Bushmen", unwittingly embodying a number of often overlapping constructions - objects of pity, children of nature, a-historical representatives of the Stone Age.⁵ Southern African herders, on the other hand, have remained "extinct", although they are beginning to be "remembered" by academic voices. Apart from an academic commitment to "presenting the objective truth", and possibly also as a response to calls for alternative history, the exact impetus to this remembering is not quite clear. One of the motivating factors in the re-casting of *Hottentots* as *Khoi-Khoi* has been an academic endeavour to "correct the bias" in history textbooks.⁶

It could not have been the place of this dissertation to include a detailed analysis of the differential roles played by changing presentations of both herders and gatherer-

⁵ Appendix A includes a number of key newspaper articles, each representative, broadly speaking, of one of, or a combination of, these constructions.

⁶ See Smith (1983) on the "Hotnot Syndrome".

hunters. I have, however, made a few preliminary observations. Both have shifted from being a barbarous threat, to being relatively harmless - "children of nature" in the case of gatherer-hunters, and "the forgotten people" in the case of the herders - from *Bushmen* to *San* and from *Hottentots* to *Khoi-Khoi*. Both, in their current forms, names and descriptions, are still undoubtedly constructed as cultural, social, political and physical "others", in museums as elsewhere.

According to the canons of scientific proof and authority, herder history in South Africa is almost non-existent. In the museums that carry ethnographic displays, there are relatively few that display interpretations of pastoralism in Southern Africa. In that I have argued that the authority of public presentations inhibits the development of a People's Archaeology, this authority is also saying that herder history does not exist.

A tradition of popularised archaeology exists, but the task is to develop this further and radicalise the existing relations of archaeological production - and this will require more than making our research results "accessible". If "accessible" in this sense is understood to mean communicating our research results in forms that allow everyone access to the *information*, this is clearly not sufficient. All researchers who regard themselves as progressive need constantly to pose and answer the questions "Why am I doing this research?" and "who am I doing it for?". It is not sufficient to complete a body of research and then ask how it can be made more widely available. The process of research, the way of asking the initial questions, and the subjective assumptions of the researcher, all define the research methodology from the beginning. What is required is for us to ensure that communities have access not just to the interpretation but also access to an understanding of the process whereby such knowledge is produced.

"... clearly a discussion of the past has to work along at least two axes. One is why we construct history, the other is how we construct history" (Bender, 1986:2).

There exists, apart from the two axes defined above by Bender (1986), a third axis. Given that dominant history and dominant processes of archaeological and historical production are being militated against in many contexts, the third axis would be how we proceed towards constructing new histories that fulfill the requirements of People's History and People's Archaeology. The main requirement is the empowerment of communities to pose questions and to challenge hegemonic constructions of their past.

While the idea that knowledge must be "handed over", as a task of academics, to the working class in accessible form, is certainly valid, it does, as Muller and Cloete (1986:7) point out, tacitly acknowledge academics as the only valid authorisers of knowledge "and therefore reproduces the relation of dependency between academics and other client groups in society" (Muller and Cloete, 1986:7). A further problem raised with the

conceptualising of academics as the holders of "legitimate" knowledge that needs to be handed over to those deprived of access to this "real" knowledge, is that it does not address the process of the production of knowledge, nor the process of its validation.

Working class resistance to academic credentialling in South Africa has not been a resistance to "sissy" (mental) knowledge as in Britain, but "a resistance to "white" knowledge ... a knowledge seen much more ambiguously as dominant and dominating" (Muller and Cloete, 1986:4). Academics hold "dual power" in that we control the credentialling system, and hold a monopoly over the definition of what counts as "real" knowledge (Muller and Cloete, 1986).

Essentially, what has been captured by academics is control over the production and validation of knowledge (Muller and Cloete, 1986). Part of the power acquired by notions of *academic freedom* and *academic autonomy* is that academics completely monopolise the procedures for validating their production practises. As Muller and Cloete (1986:10) point out, the power base of academia is embedded in "the generation and accreditation of social scientific knowledge".

The central dilemma then, around which my research is based, is that given the power and authority of the academic process through which knowledge about the past is produced, how do we break out of the comprehensively textualised image of the *Hottentot*. Given that the authority and power of academic knowledge has to be challenged, how do we move towards a People's Archaeology? In this case, how do we develop an archaeology of herders constituted upon the questions posed by communities who feel that the issue of herder history is important enough, in terms of South Africa's past, to begin asking these questions in the first place?

To what extent, though, will museums, in particular, be able to contribute towards such a process, and to what extent can museums be institutions of change? Museums, as institutions with distinctly European origins, exist as the material embodiment of the cultural memory of a nation or state. The history we learn is usually the history which a museum remembers, and museum-type knowledge is embedded in the politics of colonialism. Reading museums as a cultural memory, I can see how museums are the dreams of colonialism, a lesson in the myths of the bourgeoisie that could be read as "lessons in ruling-class rhetoric" (Bennett, 1988:84). "In the nineteenth-century museum the cultures of subordinate

classes were - and largely still are - a simple absence, excluded not only as a matter of definition ... but also as a matter of deliberate policy" (Bennett, 1988:73).

In the light of the notion of cultural memory, both the inclusions and the exclusions would have to be analysed.

In the way that lay people are unlikely to contest academic interpretation, given the power of authoritative voice,⁷ this is unlikely to be so simple in practise. People have little confidence (nor, perhaps, inclination) to confront museum presentations. The texts are powerful, and there are very few people whose interpretations work against the grain of the texts in museums. Few people have the time or inclination, as Bennett (1989:83) argues, "to look beyond what museums show them to ponder the significance of how they show what they show."

Lumley (1988:2) suggests that "museum" is a word that is gaining new significance as a signifier of a potent social metaphor, and as a means "whereby societies represent their relationship to their own history and to that of other cultures". I would argue that this has always been the case, and that while awareness of this may now be growing amongst museum professionals, it will be some time before the visiting public develop an awareness of this as the role of the museum. West (1988) and Bennett (1988) both refer to the notion of popular memory, with the museum being one major institution which organises "the terms in which the past is most commonly perceived and remembered" (Bennett, 1988:74). And to date, as Kirby (1988) has noted, museums tend to reflect the taste, values and wealth of the upper classes.

It is the discourse of common sense that predominates in museums, where discourse is a particular way of thinking, talking and writing (cf Belsey 1980). Belsey (1980:3) defines common sense as the "collective and timeless wisdom whose unquestioned presence seems to be the source and guarantee of everything we take for granted". She goes on to explain that common sense itself is ideologically constructed, rooted in a specific historical situation and operating in conjunction with a particular social formation - ie the obvious and the natural are *produced* in a society. The ordering of knowledge, and the classificatory trope by which we all live and make sense of our experience, is the fundamental base upon which museums exist. Language, states Belsey (1980), is not just the *medium* through which messages are transmitted. It is language itself which offers the possibility of constructing our world. This is the museum, ordering knowledge and constructing a language of display.

"...The material traces of the past do not tell us how the past was, but form the material base for the production of texts about these traces, and the construction of analogies of what the past was like. This analogical character of archaeology is inevitable, because what the past was for people in the past cannot be the same as what the past "is" for contemporary people. Archaeology is thus textual, constructive and interpretative, rather than descriptive and reconstructive" (Solomon, 1989:158).

⁷ See Chapter Four.

The "material traces of the past", as is amply demonstrated by museum collections, are defined by authoritative practices. The presentation of the past in museums is based upon what ethnographers, anthropologists, archaeologists and historians have deemed "legitimate" contributions to an object past.

It is not just the issue of which objects are collected to represent "our cultural heritage" that needs to be examined. It is also the manner in which these pieces of the past become objectified. Morton (1988:134) notes that the function of the object is as something to be appreciated by a viewer. This has implications for the presentation of cultural others. I argue that in order for something to be "understood/ appreciated", it has to be objectified first. Once created/constructed into an object, the next simple step is to put it on display. Because of the objectification of others by Europeans as a matter of course (and of discourse) in the formation of colonial knowledge, the display of such groups was simple - they existed for display. Again, there has been much concern internationally about the way in which cultural others have been written and displayed.⁸

Museums can be seen as "rituals of remembrance" (Lumley, 1988:2). What I have examined in this dissertation is our constructed memory of herders. The herder body has been constructed as an object, where objects are seen as fragments of the past. In the case of herder bodies, it is the bodies that have been fragmented, for their ultimate use in display. In the way that bodies are dis-membered, *Hottentots* have been remembered in lifecasts and in icons to form a particular cultural memory based on the dynamic between sexism and racism.

The liberal museum project in South Africa has little chance of succeeding given the weight of such memory. Changing visitor profiles and implementing strategies to bring more black visitors to the museums will not change the cultural memory presented in museums. The voice of museums in South Africa currently reflects the trend towards a somewhat more comfortable position within the same knowledge/power dynamic. Thus the current museum project and my project are different.⁹ Museums are essentially functioning to extend their authoritative voice - extending their voice to cater for a non-racial middle-class, where the position of museums and the status quo are being maintained. The approach has been to target the middle-class rather than to set up a museum that addresses the needs of most South Africans in terms of education and cultural memory.

Within the museum scheme, due regard is still required for the authoritative voice:

⁸ For example Martin (1986), Stocking (1985).

⁹ See Appendix F for comments received in response to a document which I sent to various people in community-based organisations. This document partly reflects how I see my project with regard to museums.

"People must feel comfortable while still having respect for the environment" (Cluver 1989).¹⁰

Given dwindling resources and a changing context - the same factors affecting Zimbabwean museums - the museum project is unlikely to generate the changes expounded in the rhetoric. Simply given the funding limits, the task of museums will become increasingly difficult in that greater amounts of work will have to be done with funds that will remain the same. With the massive re-allocation of educational funds in a post-apartheid South Africa, museums will not be prioritised, and may well have to do with more limited financial resources. Given this, the perpetuation of authoritative voice is expensive within the framework of "standards in museums".

Standards is a concept embedded in authoritative voice. The notion of standards is obviously relative, but unquestioned. While it is acknowledged that European museums cannot be emulated, museum personnel are still posing questions about whether "standards" can be maintained in a different type of museum. These are inevitably the standards of authority, the standards of presentation that have served to make museum interpretations immutable. Such a notion of standards needs to be challenged in the context of what is needed to serve best the broad community.

The rhetoric of change in museums is addressed to the notion of *relevance*. This is not necessarily to change the content of displays, but to make the authoritative voice more broadly accepted, and thus apparently increasingly relevant. The fact that some people in museums believe that "museums are relevant, but that too few people realise this" (Cluver 1989:interview), is testimony only to the fact that the content of museum displays is problematic, and that a process of negotiation with communities is urgently required in order to establish the needs of a broader society.

What is needed in the case of the herders is a radical re-textualisation. To put *Khoi-Khoi* into display cases will not be sufficient to create this. Rather, it will serve to perpetuate the textually objectified body. The notion and images of ethnographic display are inextricably bound with this gendered other, and thus the solution cannot be a return to the display case. The role of the academic/ researcher/ archaeologist will thus be to create new texts. It is academic re-textualisation that is needed to popularise a different notion, a different image - one that breaks out of the bounds of the *ugly Hottentot* and the *forgotten Khoi-Khoi*.

The historical ethnographic approach argues for the remembrance of the *Khoi-Khoi*. But the power of colonial textualisation dictates that the problematic icons I have analysed are those derived from the so-called ethnographies and travel-writing.

¹⁰ Interview - see Appendix B.

Popularising a re-worked *Hottentot* will not necessarily serve to break down the complex of racism and sexism upon which the gendered other is based, and will thus not serve to empower the oppressed. In the light of political choice I am arguing for the development of processes that, through this empowering, are oppositional to dominant production processes. I am calling for a focus on those groups in South Africa (women/ black South Africans/ working class) who have to date made historical appearances that are limited, in the dominant constructions, to a "shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then to hold a horse or serve a meal" (Coetzee, 1988:5).

The central aims of the Community Education Resources Project (CER) - *to facilitate the use of resources, research and skills of the university by progressive organisations and the oppressed community, and to pursue research and produce material in accessible form, which can be utilised by the oppressed community* - thus have to be assessed in the light of this analysis. In that there is no objective truth about the herders, and that we only have textual access to *Hottentots*, it is unlikely that accessible material about the herders, based on the historical ethnographies and the archaeology, will be sufficient to empower communities to begin asking questions towards the production of herder histories that are outside the boundaries of the glass-case/display versions.

As pointed out in earlier chapters, the level of public awareness about both archaeology and museums is limited to the extent that they have almost no profile on the public agenda. While this reflects the lack of validity of the cultural memory evoked in museums, and the esoteric remove of archaeology from the public, it has also served to allow researchers and constructors of authoritative pasts to continue producing in the manner to which we have become accustomed. Challenges to such production have to come from communities and groups demanding access to the process and the presentation.

The type of progressive popular materials that would originate from projects such as CER thus have as their political agenda a programme for change. However, my argument is that such popularised re-presentation can not be an end in itself, can not be seen as the solution to "racist and biased presentations of herder history". I believe that a more positive construction of herders could be a starting point on this road towards a radical re-textualisation.

A People's Archaeology will be based on a process of negotiation, in which researchers need to respond to questions raised by communities. This is not to argue that communities should participate in writing only their "own" histories. In addition, communities should be empowered to participate in the construction of meaning in South Africa's past. The notion of empowering voice is not towards a final "truthful"

past, but is rather a politicised notion within the practice of creating meaning that moves away from the restrictions of, and domination by, academically-created symbols of the past.

The goal of People's Archaeology is still distant. While I have made suggestions in this dissertation as to what might constitute a People's Archaeology, it nevertheless still has to be produced. The first task toward this goal is to shift archaeology away from the "empirical proof" paradigm. Archaeological research does not produce an observable, objective past. Developments within the discipline of Archaeology indicate, in line with developments in other disciplines, that our sources (artefacts, documents, site reports) are beginning to be conceptualised and used as *texts*.¹¹ The second task then would be to re-textualise the histories produced through archaeological research. Only then could we begin to popularise a re-textualised history that would, in any real sense, contribute to the development of an empowering voice. This dissertation is a contribution to the larger project thus outlined.

"The past is constantly re-created and re-arranged as a critical social activity in the present..." (Kristiansen, 1988:473).

The praxis of developing an *empowering* voice involves developing the participation of oppressed communities in the creation, construction and arrangement of histories that might often be based on experiential, as opposed to legitimate/academic, knowledge.

The route towards different relations of production necessitates a comprehensive critique of the present organisation of knowledge and ultimately of the system of political power sustained by it. In order to develop different methods of producing the past, it is necessary first to understand the conditions of production and reproduction of the traditionally authoritative voice, particularly in academic institutions. This is what I have tried to do in terms of male power and colonialism/imperialism, and the links with the presentation of "other".

In some senses I have appropriated the authority, afforded me by virtue of my position within an academic institution, to write. This project is an argument for changing the conditions of production and reproduction of the past. Ultimately, for academics, this may mean surrendering our academic authority in order to participate in developing new relations of production. In order to develop a different praxis, that attempts to address the needs of the majority of South Africans, there needs to be conscious and effective organisation amongst academics in order to have an appropriate impact on the discipline towards changing the manner in which archaeological knowledge is produced.

¹¹ See Solomon (1989) and Hall (1990a).

Furthermore, "if the objective is to take knowledge to the people - unless you go to the people first, you are making very paternalistic assumptions about what people need".¹²

I would argue that my analysis is not simply a shift towards a new, more comfortable position within the same relations of production. It is the kind of analysis that raises questions around how a more radical archaeology might articulate with the larger social conflicts that envelop it. A critical approach within archaeology is only different in that its practitioners admit to making essentially political choices and statements. This, however, is the crucial difference between a traditional archaeology and an archaeology moving towards empowering communities, in that by making such normally hidden interpretative factors explicit, readers/viewers/audience are enabled to recognise its contingency. If archaeology is presented as a "contemporary discourse which is not immune from making myths according to gender, class and other affiliations" (Solomon, 1989:170), and if the archaeologists who present archaeology in this light do not attempt to legitimise their own interpretations through exposing the practice of other archaeologies, but acknowledge that they too are participants in making the past, then this ideally would serve to demythologise academic/legitimate knowledge, and to empower communities to challenge this and to raise their own questions. Demystifying practices would ideally encourage oppressed communities to perceive themselves as holders of knowledge.

¹² Hofmeyr, Religious Studies Dept., University of Cape Town: SAMA 1987.

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APPENDIX A

List of newsclips:

1. A Police Officer Points a Finger-at his own Colleagues
Weekly Mail Sept.8-14 1989
2. Rockman's Complaints Lead to Charges
Weekly Mail Sept.29 - Oct.5 1989
3. At 95, King Reg of the Red Dunes looks for a new bride to
keep his tribe alive
Sunday Times March 15 1987
4. Baby "strong man" brings hope to lost Bushmen
Sunday Times July 12 1987
5. Absorbing photographic record of Bushman life
The Argus Jan.27 1988
6. Mountain Bushman is extinct
Weekend Argus Nov.26 1988
7. Bushmen soldiers' sad march to extinction
Sunday Times June 4 1989
8. The fate of the Bushmen
The Windhoek Advertiser June 16 1989
9. A wretched people whom heaven forgot
Weekly Mail Oct.27 - Nov.2 1989

ANTI-ELECTIONS: THE UNPRECEDENTED TESTIMONY OF A CAPE POLICEMAN



Seen through a TV lens, the Mitchell's Plain incident on Tuesday that made Gregory Rockman, right, change his mind



Portrait: ERIC MILLER, *Albion*

Witnesses tell of an event we can't describe

Weekly Mail Reporter

POLICE say it didn't happen. What didn't happen? We can't really tell you — even though our reporter, other journalists and dozens of others saw what happened at Stellenbosch University on Monday.

They saw Security Forces act against a march of students and workers on the campus. However, the incident was not mentioned in the routine police unrest report.

Asked to comment, Colonel JM Labuschagne of the Police Directorate of Public Relations in Pretoria said he had personally spoken to the officer in charge of the operation and had specifically asked him whether dogs and sjamboks had been used. The officer denied that they had been, Labuschagne said.

In terms of the Emergency, if police say they did not use dogs or sjamboks, then they didn't — even though our reporter who was on the scene and wrote an eyewitness account may have thought differently.

GAYE DAVIS reports that the singing marchers jogged across Stellenbosch University campus through the rain, armed only with a banner reading "Forward with the Workers' Struggle".

Comprised of about 500 university workers, students, clerics and residents of Stellenbosch's townships, the group was heading for De Braak — Stellenbosch's "village common".

As they made their way towards the town's business centre, the marchers were kept ranked in rows of six abreast by marshalls who halted them at crossings so that traffic policemen could halt approaching cars.

But within minutes tranquil Stellenbosch was the scene of pandemonium.

The catalysts were the (details cut in terms of Emergency regulations) who halted the march as it was making its way across the last street before reaching the common.

Seconds later, the marchers were screaming and fleeing from the (details cut).

There was no warning. Those who tumbled and fell before the gaze of onlookers were (details cut) as police (details cut).

Within minutes, all that remained at the scene was a pair of red shoes.

Later on Tuesday night, as the university's administration dithered over whether to issue a statement on the incident, the 34 people arrested were released from police cells, most of them on R50 bail.

A police officer points a finger at his own colleagues

After 12 years as a policeman, Lieutenant Gregory Rockman made an unprecedented decision on the day of the election: He renounced what he considered the unjustified behaviour of his own colleagues during the past weeks. Here he speaks to **GAYE DAVIS**

A SOUTH African Police lieutenant this week accused riot police of causing unrest by their "brutal, unprofessional conduct" and said many of his colleagues shared his views.

Lieutenant Gregory Rockman, 30, of the Mitchell's Plain police station, said he could not remain silent in the face of "innocent people and bystanders" being beaten by riot police "acting the exact role of oppressors."

"Our people have been oppressed enough. It's time somebody comes forward and speaks about police brutality," he told the *Weekly Mail*.

There were hundreds of policemen like him, who saw their credibility in the communities they served undermined by the actions of the riot police. "But they're scared to talk because regulations bind them" said Rockman. "I'm not willing for the regulations to bind me any further. I'm defying them."

As he spoke, a police helicopter clattered overhead, its searchlight scything through the night sky. Arcing teargas canisters flared overhead. Mitchell's Plain's streets were aflame in the blaze of countless barricades.

It made a bizarre contrast with the scene at the polling booth where Rockman was on duty — where young women in blazers and boosters waited to welcome voters.

The son of a machinist, he told how he became a policeman 12 years ago "because I wanted to be of some use to my community. I couldn't see them being raped and killed."

"But I'm not prepared to take part in the oppressor's role," he said.

As crime prevention officer in Mitchell's Plain he had monitored the situation "from the word go".

"The riot police units started this unrest in Mitchell's Plain," he said.

"Crowds just standing there peacefully and being teargassed, policemen

going on to school grounds, beating kids just for no reason, going into classrooms, taking out kids just to their liking ..."

His decision to speak out "was a long time coming". But an incident on Tuesday, when a small group of pupils were dispersed by riot squad members during a placard demonstration in Mitchell's Plain town centre, made him realise he could no longer remain silent.

He said he was the first policeman on the scene of the "peaceful, harmless" demonstration.

Rockman warned them in terms of the Emergency regulations and gave them 20 minutes — until 10am — to disperse.

A squad of riot policemen arrived and he explained what he'd done, asking them to move out of sight, which they did. As he rounded a building he was called by one of the protesters who told him police were beating them.

"It was another group of riot police who had come from somewhere else

and they just started beating the kids — and I stopped them. I couldn't take what they were doing. I ordered them to leave and they came back with a lieutenant."

"He wanted to query my decision. I told him I was in control of the situation and he left."

Rockman said that just after 10am, as the crowd was starting to disperse, the riot police returned and stormed the crowd, "beating everybody."

"There were innocent bystanders there, the police were hitting like mad, they were falling over each other the way they were trying to get to the people. While people were running away they were beating them, just hitting (people) over their heads. They couldn't care."

Rockman intervened again. This time he was taken to a Major Brazelle who was sitting in his van.

"I said to him I gave the people time and you just came and messed up everything. He said 'I've got nothing to say to you'."

Rockman said he then left and told

the crowd to disperse.

The police then withdrew to a nearby bus terminus, but again they charged crowds of curious onlookers who had gathered. A woman waiting for a bus was set upon by four policemen, he said. "They just hit her and hit her."

When the police withdrew he saw a man of about 45 who had collapsed. "They didn't help him ... I radioed for an ambulance."

While he was "dialoguing" with the crowd he was again summoned to Brazelle who told him: "Jy beter uit daai fokken crowd kom of andersie stui ek jou toe onder die noodregulasies" (You better come out of that crowd or I'll lock you up under the Emergency regulations).

Later he was summoned to a meeting with the divisional commissioner of police in the Western Cape, Major-General Philippus Fourie.

"I was shocked the way the man attacked me with that real boer attitude. He said, 'Wat mors jy in Major Brazelle se werk'. I explained I was on the scene and they messed in my work. My colonel intervened ... he said he felt the same way I felt."

"I told the general I wanted to put on record that the riot unit caused the unrest in Mitchell's Plain ... that it was through their brutal unprofessional conduct that this unrest is prevailing now."

Marned, with a six-month-old baby daughter and a boy of six, Rockman said he expected to lose his job.

"I don't care whether they lock me up or what they do. They can do as they please but that won't change me"

"For the riot police — most of them are white — it's a case of hulle net maar hotnots die en ons slat hulle net uitmekeer uit (they're just hottentots and we'll beat them.)"

Rockman's complaints lead to charges

TWO senior riot control policemen — one a "supercop" with a degree in crowd control — have been charged by the Cape Attorney General as a result of complaints made by rebel police officer Gregory Rockman.

Attorney General Neil Rossouw said yesterday the two officers to be charged were "supercop" Major Charles Roger Brazelle — a member of the Western Cape riot squad and former member of an elite police task force — and his colleague, Lieutenant DJ Roos.

The two officers will appear in the Wynberg Regional Court on October 3, Rossouw said.

Rossouw said his decision to prosecute was a direct result of Rockman's criticism of riot police who dispersed a demonstration by Mitchells Plain schoolchildren on September 5.

Rockman, who is now himself the subject of an internal inquiry for allegedly breaking police rules forbidding unauthorised SAP members from speaking to the press, said the riot squad had behaved like "wild dogs".

In a terse statement, Rossouw said: "In pursuance of a complaint by Lieutenant Gregory Rockman concerning the conduct of members of the SA Police at a gathering of people in the town centre of Mitchells Plain on Tuesday, September 5, the Attorney-General has decided to prosecute Major C R Brazelle and Lieutenant D J Roos on a charge of assault."

Brazelle rose to public prominence when he gave evidence in the massive damages action brought against police by residents of the KTC squatter settlement, which was razed by vigilantes in 1986.

Now aged 36, Brazelle has 20 years' service in the police force and received his commission in 1976.

He was transferred in 1978 to a special SAP task force established to deal with "terrorism" and hostages and was trained in crowd control, sharp-shooting and explosives.

In 1980 he was in Port Elizabeth, and served in Sharpeville and Sebokeng during August 1984.

He was part of the police task force which freed 25 hostages held during the Silverton bank siege and was personally responsible for shooting dead one of three alleged African National Congress operatives during the incident. He was injured by shrapnel from a grenade thrown during the siege.

Reports at the time described the task force as a secret squad of "supercops" whose training was based on West German and Israeli anti-terrorist techniques.

It was said that task-force members could scale walls, drive bulldozers, fly aircraft and live off the veld, sum-

By GAYE DAVIS
Cape Town

mer or winter.

Brazelle left the unit as a captain in 1984 to join the Western Cape section of the riot squad.

In 1987 he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in police science after six years' study through the University of Cape Town.

At the time he said his studies included "a theoretical approach to crowd and unrest control".

Testifying in the KTC trial — which has been adjourned until February next year — Brazelle said he viewed the *witdoek* vigilantes as

"plunderers" committing large-scale violence.

He said he perceived the "comrades" more sympathetically as they appeared to be the ones under attack.

However, he was not well-disposed to them in general because they were "radical political activists" responsible for attacks on the police.

A crucial aspect of the trial — in which 21 KTC families and the Methodist Church in Africa are claiming R200 000 damages — is the allegation that police, either by taking part or failing to stop the vigilante attacks, were responsible for the destruction of most of KTC and the destitution of

60 000 people.

In his evidence Brazelle denied that police secretly plotted the attacks with the *witdoeke*.

The decision to prosecute Brazelle and Roos concludes the police-led inquiry into Rockman's claims.

Major-General Jaap Joubert, who headed the investigation, is presently busy with another, longer term probe into the election-day bloodletting of September 6 on the Cape Flats and in Khayelitsha.

Joubert told the *Weekly Mail* yesterday he would report back to the Minister of Law and Order as soon as the investigation was concluded, but could not say when this would be.

TO LT. ROCKMAN

You stupid Hotnot. THE MEMBERS ON THE THIRD FLOOR CR SWANT SQUARE feel that you should not be a policeman. Listen you windgat kaffir, just because you were given voting rights does not mean that you can shoot off that stupid mouth of yours. In any case you do not even know what you are talking about. We hope that the UDF, COSATU, ANC and THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES are paying you sufficient for your stupidity.

We have nominated a certain D/CST CALDWELL to pray that you shall pass over this phase of insanity. He is very capable in his communication with the big boss. This may be what you desire as you refuse to speak to the Generals or the Minister. Then again, maybe you wish to take over his job as well?

In all sincerity, we hope that you receive your necklace of commendation. Preferably a Dunlop.

Yours sincerely
MAJ. MULLER
(COMPLIMENTS AWB)

The "joke" letter circulated in a Durban police station this week. Major Daniel Muller, head of the detective branch, denied signing it. A senior retired policeman has been appointed to investigate the matter. — Christina Scott, Durban News

At 95, King Reg of the Red Dunes looks for a new bride to keep his tribe alive

AT 95, a Bushman patriarch is looking for a new wife. She must reach no further than his shoulder, says the old man. But, most of all, she must be able to bear his children and help ensure the survival of his tribe.

Regopstaan (Stand up Straight) Krulper is the much-respected patriarch of what is believed to be the last surviving Bushman tribe in South Africa.

The others have intermarried, moved away — or simply given up the unequal struggle and died. Driven from their traditional home in the sandy wastes of the Kalahari Desert, they have been exterminated from hunger, disease and the relentless spread of Western civilisation.

Fences restrict them. Landowners bar them and polluted waterholes kill them. Today, only 24 members of the original tribe remain — and they will not survive for long without a Krulper and his wife, Terrie, are two people who would give anything to help their Bushman friends.

Regopstaan (Reg for short), who lost his first wife many years ago, is determined to preserve his lineage.

He is looking for a woman "about as high" (taller) than himself, and he wants her to bear his children. He wants the tribe to be strong again.

Says Lokkie: "I don't think it would be violating Reg's privacy if I tell you that he has been examined by a doctor and found perfectly fit. A 95-year-old man still capable of thriving in a new generation."

Over the years the Hottentots have grown to like and respect the "foreign" people who show no signs of coming to terms with the 20th century.

They even sold their flourishing restaurant business to support the Bushmen (properly called "San").

They created the Bushmen Revival Project, an ambitious scheme aimed at providing the tribe with a territory of their own and the means to survive.

The idea is to collect enough money to buy them a piece of land on which they can recapture their original lifestyle," says Lokkie.

We want to take them back in time... to a time when there were no fences and no laws to restrict them.

"Of course, it can never be the same because these people are no longer the same. We can probably provide them with the tools to survive in a world that no longer exists."

The tribe has been ordered to leave its present location in the Red Dunes area by the end of this month, but the Hottentots will pack up 24 members of the tribe and move them 200km away to a new — and again temporary — home.

Looking after Terrie Hottentot... 8 long fight with Reg dying true

healthy addition to their family. Terrie is well aware of the risk to the tribe if she does not marry.

"We know that the longer we wait, the harder it will be for this child to go back to the harsh life of the dunes where there is no guarantee of survival."

That is why our need is so urgent. We must get her married. But she means to live in a world that is totally alien to them.

"They're in trouble now because they're the only people who didn't do any deals with the whites."

Their project is not aimed at the preservation of unlimited handouts, as is the case with the Hottentots, says Terrie.

"We're talking about independence, the sort of freedom they had before the coming of the white man."

But freedom costs. Regopstaan of R130 but has to spend R10 in "last" fares to fetch his money. The balance doesn't go a long way when there are 24 mouths to feed.

Mounting food and medical bills, as well as transport costs, are eating away at the Hottentots' capital, and now the couple face the impossible prospect of supporting the tribe with no money.

Their safari business is seasonal, winning big funds in summer but losing them in winter. As a result, they have to save enough to survive for the rest of the year.

"I have been travelling to the Kalahari by truck every two weeks for the past 18 months taking food and water to the tribe," says Lokkie.

"But we've just about run out of money. I don't know what will happen to the tribe if we don't get the survival project off the ground with outside funding."

Lokkie has, over the years, developed an especially close rapport with David Krulper, Reg's son.

David, who speaks fluent Afrikaans and English, has 10 years on assignment with the South African Police and game reserve authorities.

He happily assumes the role of "PRO" for his tribe, explaining that he wants people to know more about their plight and their needs.

But he is emphatic that his people don't want to survive on charity. Lokkie agrees: "The tribe will always be dependent on the outside world, but they don't want any interference."

Their form of civilisation has suited them well for hundreds of years, and they see no need for change.

"The Bushman doesn't want money, he doesn't want to fight and he doesn't want to go to Parliament. All he wants is food and children."

Lokkie says he has no intention of picking a big decision to the tribe. "The project is the tribe's decision. I make the decisions. All I do is act as the tribe's contact with the outside world."



SURVIVAL: David Krulper, "PRO" of the tribe, instructs Warren Henning, 5, on the use of a bushman bow

It was too much. The tribe began to disintegrate, some people moving to new areas and others seeking jobs in far-away towns. But a few, like Reg and his family, elected to fight it.

It was an unequal battle, and many died. A year ago, Lokkie came to the tribe from a cattle ranch and found the tribe in a state of famine and thirst — but he wouldn't say for help.

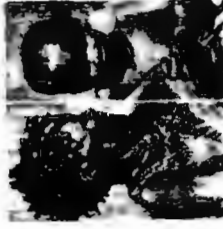
He brought the little girl back to Kuruman, where he and Terrie nursed and fed the little girl until she blossomed into a plump and healthy young woman.

They found a real people whose lifestyle had been characterised by a combination of natural and human causes.

The law said the Bushmen — essentially vegetarians, but most eaters by inclination — were no longer allowed to hunt game.

Fences and landowners kept them from water sources which they once used to hunt. They had been brought to the drought didn't help either.

Waterholes dried up, and some of the plants once tapped for their moisture (such as wild cucumbers and tamarina melons) succumbed to the drought.



Olaf Krulper, Reg's eldest, with her daughter, Moelkheid

Story and pictures by ALAN DUGGAN



Looking after Terrie Hottentot... 8 long fight with Reg dying true



SURVIVAL: Regopstaan Krulper... battling to keep his "family" alive

Baby 'strong man' brings new hope to lost Bushmen

A NEW ray of light has entered the lives of the "lost" Bushmen tribe of Kuruman — in the form of a healthy baby boy.

It's one of the few nice things that has happened to this desperately poor clan since its eviction from the Red Dunes area of the Kalahari earlier this year.

By ALAN DUGGAN

Mr Lorkie Henning and his wife, Terrie, the Kuruman couple who have been supporting the entire tribe, using their life savings and occasional contributions from well-wishers, are "over the moon".

Said Lorkie: "We're still having a tough time supporting the tribe but we believe this birth heralds the start of a better life for our friends."

The little boy — born to a recently widowed Bushman woman — has an unpronounceable Bushman name which means "strong man".

Commented Lorkie: "He'll need to be strong."

"We're still fighting to find a permanent home for the tribe, and at the last count we had only R114 left in the bank."

The Hennings, founders of the Bushman Survival Project, want to establish the

tribe on their own piece of land, far away from the "dangers of Western civilisation".

There, these gentle people would be allowed to recapture the lifestyle they once knew in the wastelands further north.

Lorkie has found a 5 000ha tract of land, complete with sand dunes and plenty of wa-

ter, which he believes would suit the Bushmen admirably.

All he needs is the money to buy it for them — a mere R500 000.

He said: "People have been very kind, but the contributions to the project so far come nowhere near to covering the real cost of supporting the tribe."

Absorbing photographic record of Bushman life

The Kalahari Bushman Dance. Photography by Jurgen Schadeberg with text by George Hulme (Heinemann)

BUSHMEN, thought to be the oldest race of humans on earth, hold a fascination for many people who have investigated their customs and places of abode.

A German photographer has produced a neat picture book about them, specialising in their rock paintings and in their intricate forms of dancing.

The text describes their ingenuity in recording their history, how they lived at peace with wild animals until bigger, darker men came from the north and fought with them for the possession of the few waterholes.

Then came the white men with guns who killed them for sport until the remnants of their tribes were driven into the dry desert places.

The Bushmen were known by several names such as Kung and San, but to most whites they are Bushmen.

The men were hunters, killing animals with bows and arrows and sharing the meat with their neighbours.

The women were the gatherers searching the veld for edible roots and berries and sharing with their tribe. They did not hoard but moved around gathering as they needed food.

They were careful of water and stored it in ostrich egg shells buried in the sand along their hunting and gathering routes.

Given to mysticism, these little people believed in the medicine man's ability to drive out the evil spirits that cause sickness and death.

By singing, dancing and the clapping of hands the Bushmen encourage the medicine man until he falls into a trance and can exercise the evil spirits.

All this is recorded in photographs that make an absorbing book.

— Lucy Bean

Mountain Bushman is extinct

by JAAP BOEKKOOI
Weekend Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — The last of the Mountain Bushmen, a race that decorated mountain faces throughout Southern Africa with beautiful paintings, has been murdered on a farm near Lothair, Eastern Transvaal.

Mr Japie Mabinde, aged about 74, was found decapitated on Kranspan Farm where he has now been buried. Police have opened a murder docket.

Mr Mabinde was the last pure-blooded Mountain Bushman to speak Xegwi, the language of hundreds of thousands of Mountain Bushmen, who differed from the Kalahari or Desert Bushmen.

Sad history

With his tragic departure the Xegwi language — which has been preserved on tapes by the University of the Witwatersrand through interviews by Professor Anthony Traill with Mr Mabinde and his brother and sister, has now officially become a "dead" language.

The brutal manner of his death is a tragic reflection on his race's sad history — one of persecution and savage extermination by both black and white.

In his last interview with me several years ago, Mr Mabinde said that since his brother Job and sister Gwaaiman died "all my people are now dead and I feel alone".

"When I come to die I believe I will see my Bushman family again. My body will go into the earth but my spirit will surely rise."

The Mountain Bushmen died out in the Cape last century, and a few survived until this century in the Dra-

kensberg, site of some of the finest of Bushman murals which depicted events 20 000 years ago, from a Phoenician ship and Portuguese caravel to Boer wagons on the Great Trek.

Mr Mabinde's ancestors are thought to have been the remnants of Bushmen who fled from the Drakensberg after being systematically hunted down by the British army, and who finally settled at Lake Chrissie in the Eastern Transvaal.

There the demoralised survivors lost identity through intermarriage, with their women being taken as concubines and their daughters — with their smooth yellow skins and reputations for off-beat mating practises — often being abducted by Swazis.

Mr Mabinde said that in recent generations a strange phenomenon had hit the few survivors of his race: they seemed unable to reproduce.

"Many of us had no children. We slept with our women but there were no babies."

It was a classic example of species collapse, unable to adapt to the changing world.

Hunting practises

The slaughter of Mountain Bushmen began soon after Van Riebeeck landed at the Cape in 1652.

White hunting practises killed off the game that was the Bushman's essential livelihood, as was the bison to the American Indians.

And when these tiny hunters, who did not regard animals as private property, took to taking cattle as compensation, white commandoes hunted down the clans, killing the men and taking women and children for use by farmers.

Bushmen soldiers' sad march to extinction

Their ancient skills forgotten, they face death back in the veld

By PETER KENNY
Windhoek

THERE'S not enough left in Namibia for Africa's oldest hunters.

The country's inhabitants, who were hunted like vermin by black and white, are the only ethnic group never to have been eradicated.

But the hunting and gathering lifestyle of the Bushmen, with their soft stiching language, gentle demeanour, lack of a sense of time or of property ownership and land tenure, is drawing to a close.

Former Bushman hunter and later SA soldier Nishay is hoping he can make farming his new livelihood.

Nishay belongs to the Ju/Wasi people who make up one of seven groups classified as Bushmen in Namibia.

Dependent

They live in Eastern Bushmanland near Botswana's western border.

Official statistics say there are some 35 000 Bushmen in Namibia — Africa's largest group. Others live in Botswana and Angola.

It is estimated that about 12 000 of the officially classified Bushmen became dependent on the SADF during Namibia's 23-year bush war.

The 203 Battalion, based at Tsumkwe in Eastern Bushmanland, has been disbanded



This Ju/Wasi Bushman could be 55 — or 150 years old



A pull for the old lady before she sets out to gather weeds for her family's nightly fire

— and people who now no longer know how to hunt naturally are being left to fend for themselves.

"I still like hunting. I am trying to be a farmer — but it's difficult. Some of my people don't know how to farm or hunt. What will happen to them?" asked a former soldier called Matheon. Their past as hunters and

gatherers ranging across southern Africa has achieved a degree of mysticism among Western people searching for a past that is no longer part of them.

Anthropologist John Marshall, an American who has been among the Bushmen since the '60s, thinks the myths built around "Bushmen" — a term he spits out

with contempt — are one of the greatest dangers facing a people who have spent the 20th Century facing extinction.

He fought against the SA authorities in Namibia declaring Eastern Bushmanland a nature reserve in which the Ju/Wasi people could be employed as rangers, guides and curio manu-

facturers.

"These are human beings you are talking about with fundamental human rights. They are not some endangered species to be gawked at in a zoo," says Mr Marshall.

He says one of the biggest myths hampering development of the Ju/Wasi is the belief that they cannot learn to become farmers.

"If we lose this land we won't be able to help them. With this little bit of land we can still help."

But Nishay is worried that some 40 000 Hereros living in Botswana may return to Namibia.

"If the Hereros herdsmen come back, we'll be pushed out," he says.

Another question being

asked is what will happen to the Herero Bushmen who came from Angola to farm what is known as the Bushman Battalion at Otjozondjona in Western Caprivi.

There are some 6 000 Hereros thought to be dependent on the army. Many of them were soldiers in Angola before they came to Namibia.

Lost

Marshall asks: "Have you heard what will happen to them? Will they be left to return to their original state? If so, they face death, because many of them can't hunt any more. They have lost the ability."

Some people have speculated that these Bushmen might become like Britain's Gurkha army unit and return to SA. Nobody is saying what will happen to them.

There are no animals to hunt where they live, water is far below the ground and much of the flora is poisonous.

If the Bushmen soldiers are left to fend for themselves, it could mean the end of them.

The fate of the Bushmen

by BRENDAN BOYLE

TSHUMKWE: Bushman Xau Debe danced through the night to prepare for his meeting with the committee that has decided the fate of his people for decades.

Seeking guidance and inspiration from the ancestors who intercede with his god, Debe pounded the red earth of his village at Gantua Pan from sunset until after sunrise.

"He says it is very important to dance, especially if you are keeping going until the sun is up," American anthropologist Jean Bieseke translated from Debe's Ju Wa language.

Bieseke is among a small group of whites advising the bushman clans of Namibia in their quest for control of the traditional hunting ground they call the Nyae Nyae.

WORRIED

"Namibia is going to be independent soon. The bushmen are worried that they will lose even the little bit of land they have left," she said as she bumped along a rutted track to Gantua Pan, where a few dozen bushmen live in small huts of sticks, mud and grass alongside a government windmill.

Stopping regularly to top up the oil in her tired truck, Bieseke kept a close watch for elephants and aggressive hunters allowed to shoot in remote eastern Bushmanland.

"The irony is that South African apartheid and the ex-

clusion of tribal homelands that they imposed have given the bushmen a measure of protection against the bigger black tribes."

"They don't control Bushmanland, but they are allowed to live here while no one else is. They are afraid that when independence comes they will be inundated by the Herero pastoralists from the south," she said.

OLDEST

The Bushmen, believed to be the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa, are small people, generally more yellow than black, who have hunted with tiny poisoned arrows and gathered fruit for over 20 000 years.

Officials estimate there are 33 000 bushmen in Namibia speaking at least five distinct languages. What they have in common is that they were all hunter-gatherers living in small bands with no formal political structure.

JU/WASI

Debe's people are the Ju Wasi, about 7 000 former nomads who have settled around the permanent waters and the government waterholes of eastern Bushmanland.

"This area is less than 30% of their original Nyae Nyae,"

said John Marshall, head of the foreign-founded Ju WA Development Foundation that is trying to help the Bushmen adapt to a settled existence.

"The land given to these Bushmen could support about 250 people by traditional means. With the thousands living here now they have to develop a mixed economy of craft making, cattle farming, hunting and gathering if they are to survive," she said.

"The big problem here is that the government uses this land for hunting by foreigners who pay vast sums to shoot elephants."

HUNTING

Marshall said there were many lions but the bushmen were not even allowed to have guns. "If they want to hunt, they have to hunt on foot with their poisoned arrows. You can't protect cattle with bows and arrows," he added.

The Bushmen recently defeated a government plan to make most of their terrain into a game park. But they have not been able to establish political control in Bushmanland.

INDEPENDENCE

With Namibian independence from South Africa likely within a year, officials in Windhoek have shelved major changes that could have helped the bushmen to extend their land rights.

"Nothing is going to happen in Bushmanland before the elections," Nature Conservation Director Polla Swart said in an interview in Windhoek.

"We have ideas to help the



The Bushmen - one of the tribes of forgotten people.

Bushmen get some direct financial gain from the hunting in their area, but it is too late to do anything now before independence," he said.

ELECTED

Debe and his friend, Tsamko Tome, the first elected representatives of the Ju Wasi, have not given up hope that they will consolidate their claim to Bushmanland.

They were the first Bushmen to address the white soldiers, policemen, game rangers and civil servants of the San Belange Committee (Bushman Affairs Committee).

BREAKTHROUGH

Though they won no concessions in their first meeting, Tome said just being there was a breakthrough after centuries

of exclusion from government policy-making.

"Other people have been speaking for us for too long," Debe told the Committee from the well of the courtroom at Tsumke, a village in eastern Bushmanland with one shop, one petrol pump and no telephone.

"It is time for us to speak for ourselves and for you to listen to us. To understand each other, people should sit together and talk and then they should talk again."

WATERHOLES

Arguing for the right to use waterholes drilled for the wild animals, Debe said defiantly: "The water has always been ours. Why should we have to ours? If it is there, we will use

it." "Not so," said Committee Chairman Karel von Bach. "I cannot allow you to challenge the authority of the government. If you do that, there will be chaos."

Von Bach gave the two bushmen an hour before he moved the meeting behind closed doors and sent them away without a ruling on their appeal for water rights.

LION INFESTED

Debe and Tome went home through lion-infested bush to tell their people in a *radio* detail about the meeting.

They now plan to take their case to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group supervising Namibia's change to independence. — Sapa-Reuter



Bushman - facing the threat of being submerged under the onslaught of development.

History has been unkind to the desert hunters whom the settlers enslaved



Poisoning arrows — Preserved in a plastic stone age



Women in a Tsumkwe bar — Among squatters — Social problems like alcoholism are rife

A wretched people the heavens deserted

●From PAGE 9

riety of wildlife in the area. A number of endangered species are found here and there are still fears that Eastern Bushmanland could be turned into a game reserve — a move that was first proposed 10 years ago.

Marshall describes the Bushmen attempts to farm as a "bitter struggle against wall-to-wall lions that they have to fight with little bows and arrows, 600 resident elephants, trophy hunters, safari companies and an administration that wants to preserve a few Ju/wasi in a plastic stone age as a tourist attraction, and dispossess the rest."

Conservationists counter that the tourism and trophy hunting could bolster the Bushman economy. It is an unresolved matter, typical of the conflicts between human land hunger and wildlife conservation that are being encountered throughout Africa.

Marshall's plan, however, could incorporate at best 4 (000 of the 32 000 Bushmen in Namibia.

"Eastern Bushmanland is the very small tip of the iceberg," said Marshall. "The only reason we are able to help people at all is because we still have a fragment of communal land."

A wretched people whom heaven forgot

Hunted for sport, forced into serfdom, chased off their land — no other southern African people have been as brutalised and debased as the Bushmen of northern Namibia. Which is why the best test of a post-independence Namibia is the kind of future it offers to the people of the Kalahari

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

JOSEPH KOMAGA lay crying with pain in the sparse shade of a thorn tree somewhere between Obabis and Orimopsis. His toes were worn down and his skin so raw that he could have been more than 90 years old.

Komaga, a Naron Bushman, did not know his age, but he could remember "die tyd voordat die wit man die wereld ower het" — the time before the white man stole the world, when he lived off the wild fruits of the veld.

Komaga had three generations of his family with him. His daughter, Martha Afrikaner, was herself already old. They had pulled their donkey carts off to the side of the road, out of the moonlight, while the grandchildren went to fetch water from a nearby stream.

He was on his way back from receiving medical treatment in Gobabis for the pain in his abdomen, a journey of several days by cart from their home. The grandchildren were scouting the farms for jobs in the same Kalahari veld where their ancestors had searched for melons and kudu.

In his lifetime, Komaga had witnessed an entire cycle. His people had gone from being nomads to slaves to wage labourers to nomads. When he was young it was a "homeless life". It was a hard life but heaven saw to the food, you did not need to maintain gardens.

Far from the romanticised and mythologised picture of the Bushman people as noble hunters with bow and poisoned arrow living in harmony with nature, most of Namibia's 32 000 Bushmen are today impoverished farmworkers or squatters. As Namibia moves towards independence the Bushmen people face a challenges to their survival.

When the Germans arrived in Namibia they rode around on horseback, shooting Bushmen on sight. People were roasted on bonfires or hung in rows from trees like bitons. As late as the 1930s, the Bushmen of Namibia were actively shot as ver-



In Gautcha — A hunter brings home a hare



Dancing, in uniform — "What can we say? The world is not really ours."

Pictures: PAUL WEINBERG, Altpress

Successive laws by both German and South African colonial administrations, culminating in the Bow and Arrows Act of 1927, sanctioned the slaughter and drove the Bushmen into forced labour on the estates.

Komaga remembers being told to leave the veld. If you went on shooting wild animals, you were throwing into jail or shot, he said. So he went to work for the "baas" for no wage — just a few handfuls of maize meal a day.

Colonialism in Namibia stopped just short of the total genocide that befell the Bushman of South Africa.

For hundreds of years, random massacre of Bushmen was the norm. It was not only a white man's pastime — black people also contributed to the elimination of the country's oldest indigenous inhabitants.

By the 1950s, the Bushman lived only on the margins far from other human settlements, in the inhospitable Kalahari Desert of Angola, Botswana and Namibia.

American anthropologist John Marshall toured the Kalahari basin in 1950 with his father in search of the hunter-gatherers of legend. He found the Ju/Wasi — "the one single group in the entire sub-continent living as hunter-gatherers" and a few in the north of Namibia who had retained access to land and water while hunting on the side.

In the past four decades the position of the Bushmen has gone steadily downhill, while paradoxically the stereotype of cute little people has been made popular by such films as *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.

This image hides the real tale of the Bushmen — of cruelty and debasement of humanity, and of the theft of their land that never stopped.

The West Caprivi — between the waters of the Kunene and the Okavango — was turned into a game reserve in 1966, and its 6 000 Bushman inhabitants fled into Angola, before being driven south of the border again by the war.

Vast tracts of former Bushman land

was handed over to the Herero and the Kavango "homelands" as Pretoria pursued its homelands policy into Namibia in the wake of the Odendaal Commission. Bushmanland itself was proclaimed a "homeland" in 1970 with its capital at the waterhole of Tsumkwe.

Several thousand Bushmen today live in abject poverty around Tsumkwe and the South African Defence Force bases of the two Bushman battalions in western Bushmanland. Here Bushmen, renowned for their skill in tracking animals, were trained as bloodhounds to hunt down Swapo guerrillas. Among the squatters are those driven from Western Caprivi. Social problems such as alcoholism and prostitution are rife.

Now the soldiers have been demobilised under the Namibian independence plan, leaving those who depend on the bases in an even more desperate situation.

The SADF wants to retain the services of the battle-hardened 15th former-Angolan !Kung Bushmen

mercenaries of 201 Battalion at Omkapa camp, who are regarded as the toughest of the tough. These men will be able to choose whether or not to continue their careers with the SADF in South Africa.

However, their tenuous status as Namibians is causing consternation among African states at the United Nations and at the Joint Monitoring Commission which last week raised the fact that they are registered to vote, while it is likely they will move on to South Africa after the elections.

The more than 1 000 Namibian Bushmen in 203 Battalion and their relatives will not be able to choose to move to South Africa, an SADF representative confirmed last week.

Marshall said the former soldiers and their squatter dependents on the bases would be welcome to be included into the co-operatives in Eastern Bushmanland, where he is establishing settlements around springs and boreholes, and where the Bushmen are learning to manage a large-scale farming economy.

But the success of this project depends on whether a future Namibian government allows the development of the Bushmen to take precedence over the conservation of the rich wa-

6
Bushmen are exploited by both white and black. Conditions at the Herero cattle posts are often worse than on white farms

9

Most of the rest are farmworkers earning meagre wages if they are lucky enough to have a job on Namibia's large farms. Their exploiters are both white and black. Conditions at the Herero cattle posts are often worse than on the white farms, where at the very least they are provided with shelter.

Joseph Komaga's granddaughter, Maria Afrikaner and her husband Jonas, were renounced without notice by their white employer a few weeks ago. Aged in their late 20s with four children, they are people with virtually no possessions.

They did not know where they were going next as they joined the small bands of Bushmen who today stumble through the desert on donkey carts in search of work.

For these people next month's election is a far-off reality, yet it could have a profound effect on their lives.

As Marshall points out their experience is part of the overall dispossession of the Namibian people. A total of 60 percent of Namibia is white-owned or commercial land, while 15 percent is set aside for nature conservation. Only 25 percent is communal land belonging to 80 percent of the Namibian people — and people such as Komaga's family have no access to it anyway.

Perhaps the best test of whether Namibia is really able to shake off its colonial past is whether the young state can offer a different future for the Bushmen — and for that matter all the dispossessed downtrodden farmworkers and rural unemployed of Namibia — the poorest of the poor. That of necessity would mean a redistribution of land, involving some quite radical economic restructuring.

As Komaga's daughter, Maria, said, describing the cause of her hunger on that desert road: "Wat kan ons se? Die wereld is mos nie ons s'n nie." (What can we say? The world is not ours.)

6 If the Bushmen went on hunting, they were thrown into jail or shot. So they went to work for the baas ...

●To PAGE 10

APPENDIX B

List of people interviewed:

(All people were interviewed at the institutions at which they are based).

1. NAME: Mr Alec Campell

POSITION: Former Curator, National Museum and Art Gallery, Gaborone, Botswana.

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 13.2.1989

2. NAME: Dr Michael Cluver

POSITION: Director, South African Museum, Cape Town

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 27.10.1989

3. NAME: Mr Dave Collett

POSITION: Archaeologist, Great Zimbabwe, Masvingo

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 2.2.1989

4. NAME: Mr Wouter Holleman

POSITION: Deputy Director, Albany Museum, Grahamstown

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7.9.1988

5. NAME: Mr Gwilym Hughes

POSITION: Archaeologist, Museum of Natural History, Bulawayo

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 10.2.1989

6. NAME: Mr Syd Kannemeyer

POSITION: Education Officer, South African Museum, Cape Town

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 19.1.1989

7. NAME: Mrs S.T. Nduku

POSITION: Director, Northern Region Museums, Zimbabwe

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7.2.1989

8. NAME: Mr Cecil Nonqane

POSITION: Technical Officer, informally involved in education, Albany Museum, Grahamstown

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 8.9.1988

9. NAME: Ms Sheryl Ozinsky

POSITION: Public Relations Officer, South African Museum, Cape Town

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 23.1.1989

10. NAME: Mr Brian Wilmot

POSITION: Director, Albany Museum, Grahamstown

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7.9.1988

APPENDIX C

List of communications:

1. Letter from Archaeology Department, UCT to Time-Life News Service.
14 May 1987
2. Letter from Time-Life to Professor Parkington and Colleagues, Archaeology Department, UCT.
14 July 1987
3. Letter from Archaeology Department, UCT to Time-Life News Service.
31 July 1987
4. Letter from Time-Life to Professor Parkington, Archaeology Department, UCT.
18 August 1987
5. *Time*, May 4 1987: United No More.
6. *Time*, August 31 1987: Letters page
7. Letter from Bwendo Mulengela, University of Zambia, to Dr. John Parkington, Archaeology Department, UCT.
8 October 1987
8. Letter from K. Edwin Knipmyer to John Parkington, Archaeology Department, UCT.
21 September 1987
9. Letter to State President Mr Botha from Archaeology Department, UCT.
13 February 1986
10. Letter from State President P W Botha to Professor Parkington and colleagues, Archaeology Department, UCT.
26 February 1986
11. A Man Called Botha
Sunday Times Nov.3 1985

650-9111

14 May 1987

TIME-LIFE News Service
P O Box 52630
Saxonwold
2132

Dear Sir

We are concerned about two blatant misconceptions perpetuated in your review on the Afrikaners (May 4). Both are myths which originated within a settler philosophy and are latterly upheld by the Christian National Education system of this country.

The "few brown skinned nomads" you refer to were in fact a society of gatherers, hunters and pastoralists which numbered in the tens of thousands, inhabiting large areas of the Cape and Namibia. In addition, "fierce Bantu (sic) tribesmen" most certainly were not moving southwards in search of new lands when they clashed with European settlers. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the first farming communities in the Transvaal date from the 3rd century A.D. Natal and the Eastern Cape, scene of many settler battles, was inhabited by African farmers some 1000 years before the arrival of the first Europeans.

Many academics are concerned by the pernicious and subtle influence of historical myths such as these. It is mortifying to find your publication presenting such inaccuracies under the aegis of history to an international audience.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. J. Parkinson

R. Yates

A. Manhire

L. Webley

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

ELIZABETH L. WILSON
EDITORIAL OFFICES

July 14, 1987

Dear Professor Parkington and colleagues:

Thank you for writing in response to our May 4 cover story on South Africa. Our delayed reply, for which we apologize, is due to a heavy volume of reader mail.

We acknowledge with regret the fact that several historical points we made do not correspond to the situation as generally understood by scholars. Our reference to "a few brown-skinned nomads" underestimated their numbers: the San and the Khoikhoi outnumbered the white population for years. And evidence points to Bantu habitation of the Transvaal for many centuries before the Great Trek, discrediting the view that whites met southward-moving blacks in the uninhabited wilderness. Whites had furthermore encountered the Bantu well prior to the 1830s. Our errors were unintentional, and might have been avoided had we considered all the available scholarship on the point. We have now changed our file material accordingly, and are most appreciative of your frank, informed letter of correction.

The editors, who send their best wishes, value your interest in TIME.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Wilson

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31 July 1987

Elizabeth L Wilson
Editorial Offices
Time and Life Building
Rockefeller Centre
New York 10020
USA

Dear Ms Wilson

Many thanks for your letter of July 14. Despite your admission of factual inaccuracies contained in the May 4 cover story we are dismayed that no attempt has been made to rectify them publicly.

TIME is not only read with interest by an international audience but also by South Africans, many of whom regard themselves as "white" and would have misguidedly drawn comfort in finding what is demonstrably a prejudiced version of history repeated under the authority of your magazine. TIME has contributed, albeit unwittingly, to the bolstering of a racist, settler philosophy which a true majority of people in this country are struggling to eradicate. The battle by archaeologists, historians and others for a better informed public perspective of southern African history is difficult enough without having to contend with misinformed authority.

Simply altering your file material rather than publishing a correction of the facts is therefore wholly inadequate. We enclose a recent newspaper article demonstrating that disappropriation and tenure of land are still important socio-political issues. Surely there is material here for a more satisfactory examination of the "facts" as properly understood today?

We trust you will give attention to this.

Yours sincerely

JOHN PARKINGTON
Professor of Archaeology

ANDREW B SMITH
Assoc. Professor of
Archaeology

ROYDEN YATES

ANTHONY MANHIRE

TIME
THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

JOAN D. WALSH
EDITORIAL OFFICES

August 18, 1987

Dear Professor Parkington:

Thank you for your most recent letter.

As you requested, your letter of May 14 was resubmitted to the editors and will be published in all editions of the August 31 issue of TIME.

We appreciate your persistence, and that of your colleagues, on this point.

Sincerely,

Joan D. Walsh

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Many people gathered at a Soweto rally signed their determination to change the system.



Police officers in uniform are seen in a crowd during a protest in Johannesburg.

World

TIME/MAY 4, 1987

COVER STORY

United No More

The Afrikaners, long linked in upholding apartheid, start to split

"War isn't heading for a revolution in our country. We are already in the midst of one," says the stern silver-haired churchman as he paces at the window of his study. And by that I mean it is a revolution of ideas—a revolution of our system of values he is forced—even if we don't like it—to accept. We can't go on any longer as we did for the past 380 years.

These words would not be surprising if they came from one of the liberal reformers who have long opposed apart-

heid. South Africa's poisonous system of racial segregation. But they come from Johan Heyns, the new leader of the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk (N.G.K.), the Dutch Reformed Church, for many years one of apartheid's principal pillars. The church has traditionally provided Afrikaners with scriptural support for the system by insisting that separation of the races represents the will of the Almighty.

As South African whites head toward their first general election in six years on May 6, Heyns' warning is clear proof that the fortress of apartheid, which looks so monolithic to the outside world, is show-

ing signs of cracks. It is also an indication that the once united Afrikaners, die witte, the white tribe, who number only 3 million of the country's nearly 35 million inhabitants but grimly assert their claim to political power, stand united no longer.

State President P.W. Botha's Nationalists are expected to win next week's election handily in a recent poll given them 58%, but the violence and bloodshed that are leading up to that election make the counting of white ballots almost an irrelevance.

*Black number 25 million, mixed-race 10 million, English-speaking whites 1.5 million, Indians and other Asians 1 million.

TIME, MAY 4, 1987

If the majority were allowed to vote, according to a poll by Johannesburg's largest black newspaper, the *Sowetan*, the winner by a substantial margin would be Nelson Mandela, an imprisoned leader of the outlawed African National Congress (A.N.C.) whose wife Winnie has become an international symbol of protest. Banned from the polls, the blacks turned to another kind of action last week in one of the worst outbreaks of violence since a state of emergency was declared last June.

The new bloodshed began when a hand grenade came sailing out of the back of a truck as it sped past a police parade ground in Soweto, the huge black township outside Johannesburg. The blast killed one black woman and wounded 64 others. Six hours later a bomb exploded under a parked car in the white suburb of Mayfair, shattering windows and starting a fire.

Much worse lay ahead. The corner of conflict was the six-week-old strike by 18,000 railway workers. Officials of the government-run South African Transport Services suddenly announced that any striker who did not return to work on Wednesday would be fired. When the deadline arrived, only 1,000 workers showed up at their jobs; the other 16,000 were told that the company had "terminated their contracts."

About 50 blacks armed with axes and

sticks then began marching from the headquarters building of the Congress of South African Trade Unions to the nearby Dornfontein railroad station. Police tried to disperse them, then bargained them.

The marchers attacked the officers with knives, clubs and machetes, according to police. The police answered by opening fire, killing three protesters and wounding five more, and then followed a trail of blood back to the union headquarters and besieged the building. Finally the police broke in and arrested 400 people inside.

Portions of this story have been altered in copies of TIME distributed in South Africa because of the emergency press restrictions in force in that country.

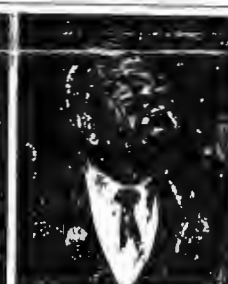
In another railroad clash, in Germiston east of Johannesburg, police killed three more union demonstrators. The police and they were attacked by workers wielding knives and throwing stones; union leaders insisted the police had stormed into the crowd with whips.

In Soweto, anonymous pamphlets called for a three-day general work stoppage to protest municipal police actions against rent-strikers. Thousands stayed home from jobs and school, some out of fear. Black militants stoned buses until all bus and taxi service between Soweto and Johannesburg temporarily shut down.

The violence was not limited to Johannesburg. In Umzimba, a black township outside the Indian Ocean port of Durban, riot police hunting suspected terrorists surrounded a house and ordered the occupants to leave the building. One man came out shooting, officials said, but police gunfire drove him back inside. Another man opened fire from a window and was shot dead. Police flung hand grenades into the house and set it afire. Inside the ruins they found two corpses and a cache of AK-47 assault rifles.

The government blamed all the violence on agents of the A.N.C. and publicly warned Zambia and other countries along South Africa's northern border to stop providing them with aid. On Saturday South African commandos attacked the Zambian town of Livingstone, blowing up two buildings and killing five people who Pretoria claimed were A.N.C. guerrillas.

Violence has become commonplace in South Africa as more and more blacks have concluded that they have no other way to protest against the apartheid government. And although Botha at his campaign rallies cries defiance and declares he will never compromise on racial segregation in government, housing and education, many embittered Afrikaners know that change is inevitable. "People are really concerned about the choices they must



Johan Heyns, new N.G.K. leader.

Pieter Koornhof, N.G.K. member.

Eugene Terre Blanche, N.G.K. member.

make," says one senior campaign staffer. "Angst is an Afrikaner growth industry."

How do ordinary Afrikaners look at the different choices confronting them? Just to some of them:

• **Frederik van Zyl**, a successful building contractor: "I don't want blacks to take over South Africa, but I don't like the way that people treat the blacks either. I say my boys well, and they like working for me. But hell, man, I wouldn't want to live next door to them. When I go to football matches at Rand Stadium, I realize how many of them there are and how we have to make a deal with them in order to survive."

• **Jan van Riebeeck**, a railroad worker who helps in a soup kitchen that provides 300 meals a day for the Afrikaner poor: "I haven't made up my mind. I'm not happy with any party or any policy in South Africa. I don't agree completely with anything that is being offered. I don't change overnight."

• **George Walker**, who quit his job as a bank executive to join a foundation working for an end to apartheid: "Change in this country has to come from us Afrikaners. And I want to be in it."

• **A housewife** living near Johannesburg who did not want her name used: "If he teaches us that blacks can live next door, what can I do? If they are lean and not noisy, I won't object. But I hope my children finish school before the blacks are allowed in."

• **Dawie Cronjé**, a traffic policeman: "It's easy to hate blacks. I've seen enough crime and senseless stuff among black drivers on the roads to wonder what the hell would happen if I saw a white car laying down the law. I have to be honest and say that I feel more comfortable with my own people, at least Afrikaner people. But we all know that change will have to come. I can't say I feel threatened."

• **Johan de Villiers**, who farms 5,000 acres along the Limpopo River: "We

whites are always worried about our future and our children's future. We're always suspicious. We always want more and more. The African is different. If there is a drought, he moves on. He can adapt. If they can control their breeding and we can control our advance, there is no reason we can't somehow get together. We do the planning, they do the work."

• **Hansie Willemse**, a farmer near the Zimbabwe border: "I fought in Zimbabwe for 22 years. Yes, I fought. Now I'm sick of fighting. I think they are capable here of doing something out around a table. That's what should have happened 50 years ago. I don't think it's too late."

It is difficult to draw firm conclu-



The Landing

Jan van Riebeeck of the Dutch East India Co. led an expedition that went ashore at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The party found only a few nomads, whom the settlers called Hottentots.

sions from random interviews, but it is obvious that many Afrikaners regard the traditional apartheid as doomed. They anticipate significant changes and, though anxious and apprehensive, insist they are ready to cope with them. Whether they are really ready is another question.

Actually, even Afrikaner politicians have been proclaiming for some time that change is coming. It was in 1979 that Pieter Koornhof, then Minister of Cooperation and Development, rather boldly announced to an audience in Washington, "Apartheid as you came to know it is dead." And none other than the crusty old (now 71) Botha declared that the "aspirations of urban blacks and the fulfillment of them must form part of the strategy for the protection of everyone in South Africa."

Those pronouncements sounded like little more than empty rhetoric until, under great pressure from both the black majority and the outside world, Botha in that same year grudgingly drew up a list of what he called reforms. Some were of considerable significance, though they consisted mainly of canceling a few of the more obvious harassment sanctioned by the 200-odd apartheid laws. The law excluding blacks from official labor unions was rescinded in 1979 (about 1 million are now members). The law forbidding interracial marriage went in 1985. The hated passbooks, which sharply restricted a black's right to travel and find a new job, were abolished last year. Other, supposed reforms, such as the creation of two separate and powerless legislative chambers for South Africa's Asians and coloreds, were introduced but had little effect.

Botha's talk of reform pleased few. Black reform, predictable under the law of rising expectations, became so widespread and bloody that he imposed a harsh state of emergency last June. An estimated 20,000, mostly blacks and many of them children, have been detained without trial since the beginning of the

state of emergency, some 4,500 of them are still under arrest. But black leaders refuse even to negotiate with Botha unless he agrees to legalize the A.N.C. and begin negotiations on a new and democratic constitution. Some Afrikaners, on the other hand, reacted to all talk of reform as if it were the work of the devil. Members of parliament broke with Botha and formed the new Conservative Party, pledged to total apartheid, now and forever.

Central to the illusion of apartheid, as decreed by the major segregation laws of the 1950s, was the fantasy that South Africa's blacks could be legally assigned to ten autonomous tribal homelands and then admitted to white South Africa only as migrant workers, not citizens. The realities of urbanization mock that fantasy, and anyone wandering around Cape Town or Johannesburg today can see blacks sitting next to whites in restaurants or living up a black traffic policeman ticketing a white who ran a stop sign, or even a black-and-white couple holding hands as they wander into a video-rental store.

But venture out into the Afrikaners' rural heartland in the Transvaal or the Orange Free State, and apartheid looks alive and well. The Afrikaner driving his baai (pickup) rides alone in the front seat, while his black laborers squat in the back. Outside, some blacks sit eating bread and drinking milk they have bought from the nearby corner store, which has a counter for natives only. There is no obvious hostility here, just a sense that this is how things are, and always will be. As the Lord made them.

What traditionally united the Afrikaners was not just their language and their religion but also their history of struggle and oppression. They are very proud and very aware of their claim that they came to this land first. When Jan van Riebeeck disembarked at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 to establish a supply station for Dutch East India Company vessels en route to India, he found nobody except a few brown-skinned nomads whom the Dutch called Hottentots. Van Riebeeck described these "barbarians" as a "dull, rude, lazy and sinking nation," and most of them subsequently died in an epidemic of smallpox, brought on a company ship from India. To do the heavy work, the Dutch settlers, who were soon joined by a number of Germans and French Huguenot refugees, brought in slaves, mostly from Madagascar, Mozambique and the Dutch East Indies. Thus the primal relationship between the Afrikaners and the blacks took form.

The British arrived in 1795 and saved the Cape Town settlement with no real justification except that they wanted to deny the strategic site to France's India trade. But even after the defeat of Napoleon, the British stayed on. They subjected the pioneering Afrikaners to the discomforts of



TIME, MAY 4, 1987

TIME, MAY 4, 1987



A woman in the Transvaal with a soldier she has employed for 26 years

British law, including a ban on slavery. In the 1830s the Afrikaners decided to escape English rule by setting forth on their Great Trek, which over the years has acquired the epic aura of a Long March or a Valley Forge. Packing their women and children into ox-drawn wagons, some 6,000 Afrikaners departed from the British settlements on the coast and tramped hundreds of miles to the north-east, to the uninhabited wilderness along the Vaal River.

It was only after they had established themselves there that they clashed for the first time with fierce Bantu tribesmen moving southward in search of new lands. Border skirmishes lasted for decades, imbuing the Afrikaners with a permanent sense of being threatened, isolated and beleaguered.

In their isolation, the two landlocked Afrikaner republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State lost all contact with their Dutch origins. The Afrikaners had their own language now and their own lands. There was no thought of ever going home to Europe because there was no longer any home to go to. And the outside world ignored their struggles. The Englishmen had passed them by, and so had the Industrial Revolution.

Then in 1867 somebody discovered a diamond near the Orange River. "Cecil Rhodes," said the British Colonial Secretary as he inspected one of the earliest of these discoveries, "this is the rock on which the future success of South Africa will be built." Indeed, a quarter of a billion carats were to be dug out in the next

century. Since the diamonds lay in Afrikaner lands, the British simply declared that they were annexing those lands, and British miners came pouring in. Two decades later rich deposits of gold were discovered in the Transvaal. Still more British and other foreigners came flooding in to dig up what had been the Voortrekker homeland.

The Afrikaners organized a fierce resistance to the British in the Boer (farmer) War (1899-1902). Outnumbered and outgunned, they took to the bush and engaged in guerrilla attacks (the word *commando* is one of their contributions to the English language). Britain's commander, Lord Horatio Kitchener, was no less



The Great Trek

In the 1830s, to escape British rule, 6,000 Afrikaners latched onto a wagon and journeyed into the hinterlands. They finally stopped in the uninhabited wilderness along the Vaal River.

ferce, he sent troops to burn down the Boer commando villages. Women and children were rounded up and confined in a new kind of establishment: concentration camps. Of the estimated 60,000 prisoners, some 26,000 women and children succumbed to famine and disease.

When it was all over, the British reigned supreme over the miles and resentful Afrikaners. Some Boer military leaders, notably Louis Botha (no relation to the current President) and Jan Christiaan Smuts, preached reconciliation with the British, and it was largely because of them that Britain united all its regional territories into the Union of South Africa in 1910. Botha and Smuts became the nation's first two Prime Ministers and led it into World War I on Britain's side.

But during this era of reconciliation there arose an underground movement that preached Afrikaner solidarity and resistance to both British and blacks. Its driving force was the Broederbond (the Brotherhood), a secret society founded in 1918 to get better jobs for Afrikaners, many of them victims of economic hardship, and to promote the use of Afrikaans, a hybrid variant of Dutch that became a written language only in the middle of the 19th century. Today, though not listed in any telephone book, the Broederbond has 12,000 members in more than 800 cells, including President Botha (Member 4,487) and most other Afrikaner leaders of both church and state.

One of the Broederbond's most zealous recruits, Daniel Malan, founded the present-day National Party in 1934 and

TIME, MAY 4, 1971



A woman in the Transvaal with a soldier she has employed for 26 years

finally achieved the Afrikaners' revenge in the election of 1948. He defeated Smuts and the British influence under a new slogan: apartheid. It was not really new, of course. The South Africa Act of 1909, passed by the British Parliament, had barred blacks from sitting in the legislature. The Natives Land Act of 1913 had established a few black "reserves" and claimed the remaining 65% of the nation for whites. Interracial sex was proscribed as far back as 1902.

But these were fairly primitive efforts in asserting white power. The spirit of Malan's Afrikaner Nationalists represented an all encompassing ideology, a vision of how life should be organized. One of their first measures, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, did just what it promised. But exactly who belonged to which race? The Population Registration Act of 1950 provided elaborate definitions and regulations, and even now about 1,000 people every year apply to get reclassified from one race to another. That same year the Group Areas Act empowered the government to uproot thousands of people and move them elsewhere. In Cape Town's District Six, for example, some 70,000 coloreds were removed from their bustling and vibrant neighborhood and shipped to a housing project outside town so that their old homes could be razed and replaced with white houses and high-rises. Many whites boycotted this scheme, however, and the razed area remains a series of vacant lots.

By 1965 apartheid had become so obsessively established that a white taxi

driver refused to let a blind white girl and her colored nurse ride together in his cab; that white and colored children were forbidden to appear together in a Red Cross pageant; that Cabinet ministers refused to attend any reception where blacks or coloreds might be present; that the Afrikaner poet Breyten Breytenbach was denied permission to bring his Vietnamese wife into the country to meet his parents; that a black workman could hold two votes for a white electorate but was not allowed to join them together.

Presiding over this state of folly was one of Malan's most dogmatic successors, Hendrik Verwoerd. In a radio broadcast, Verwoerd declared, "The policy of separate development (apartheid) is designed for happiness, security and stability ... for the Bantu as well as the whites."

This cruel form of happiness and justice has, of course, inspired a worldwide campaign against South Africa. After years of protesting by protest groups, the U.S. Congress in 1986 banned new corporate investment in South Africa and stopped the import of South African steel, iron, coal, uranium and textiles, as well as the export of computers and petroleum to that country. Similar punishments have been imposed by the European Community, the Commonwealth and Japan.

In response to all this, the pugnacious Botha could and did invoke the Afrikaner traditions of solidarity and defiance against what he has called "cynical and saccharine antagonism abroad." But what has turned many Afrikaners against the segregationist ideology is that it simply does not work very well as an industrialized modern society. The white-run economy needs blacks, and it needs them in the same buildings with whites, working side by side. Botha is an autocrat, not someone who enjoys bowing to pressure, but even he admits that he dislikes and avoids the word *apartheid*. He prefers "cooperative coexistence."

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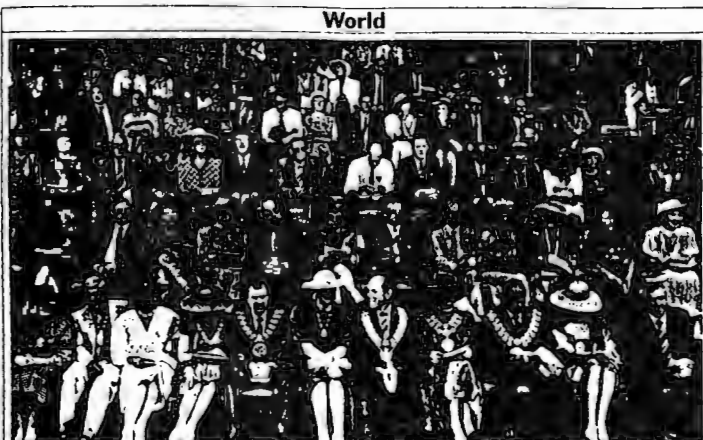
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Struggle for Survival

Shinners between the new owners and the tribes in the area lasted for decades. They left the Afrikaners with a permanent sense of being isolated, beleaguered but ultimately victorious.

TIME, MAY 4, 1971



A scene of jubilation celebrating the 100th anniversary of the town of Banská, which is located in the region of the gold discoveries of the 1880s

fect was, not surprisingly, to what the appetite for more. It was in this spirit that he called for new elections thinking that he could crush his critics on the right by campaigning on a platform of xenophobia. But Botha soon found himself confronting an unprecedented wave of criticism from the "left" which is left only in relation to Afrikaner traditionalism. This criticism came from three important directions.

The *intellectual*. Bureaucracy is an ideology as well as a power system, apartheid needs the Afrikaner intelligentsia to explain and justify its workings. The intellectual center of Afrikanerdom is the University of Stellenbosch, just outside Cape Town, and Stellenbosch is in turmoil. Not only are the students increasingly disaffected (few but 27 senior students recently resigned in protest from the National Party and issued a manifesto demanding abolition of all "revelations of apartheid." When the Cape Town Nationalist newspaper *Die Burger* damned the gesture as "trivial" because there were only 27 protesters in a faculty of more than 700, an additional 301 promptly signed the manifesto and promised that more would soon add their signatures.

"The government is the captive of its own meaningless rhetoric," observes Stellenbosch Economics Professor Sampe Torrance, a leading National Party adviser, member of the Broederbond and, until he was fired last month for joining the 27, vice chairman of the South African Broadcasting Corp. "The government is never prepared to admit mistakes. It

will not dismantle apartheid. The National Party is an Afrikaner party, and it intends to keep power not just in white hands but in Afrikaner hands. That was never in favor of real reform. That was just cosmetic, to prolong Afrikaner control."

Petty politics and stereotyped slogans no longer please anyone," wrote another of the 27 signers, Philosophy Professor Willie Esterhuysen, in the *Sunday Times* of Johannesburg. He claimed to be speaking not just for a few professors but also for a growing number of professional people, doctors, businessmen, the young. "People are not only yearning for new ideas. They also want a new political style, a rhetoric which is conciliatory. Unhappy-



Diamonds

The discovery of the precious gems near the Orange River in 1867 brought foreign miners pouring into the Afrikaners' farmlands. In 1872 Britain annexed the territory.

ness with the National Party and its leadership does not simply concern the pace of reform. It is concerned with the nature, goals and strategies of reform itself.

Novelist Andre Brink (*Knowledge of the Night*), some of whose work has been banned in South Africa, agrees: "If faced with the ultimate choice between staying and going under the Masada complex, need not prevail. There is still a chance—small and diminishing rapidly—of entering into the kind of dialogue with the present which may open up the future."

Frederick van Zyl Slabbert was leader of the official opposition the Progressive Federal Party until he resigned in disgust last year, so his pronouncements are hardly new. But he is also a former professor of sociology and thus well tuned to the new mood of intellectual dissatisfaction. He blames Botha for much of the discord. "He is an authoritarian President uncomfortable with questions or discussion. In the past, the National Party was consulted; now Botha tells it what to do. This has emasculated the Parliament. The party faithful feel that they have lost control over their destiny."

Of the onetime farmers who still proudly celebrate the anniversary of the Great Trek, Slabbert says, "Afrikaners are now bourgeois, upper middle class the Babbitts of Bloemfontein. They are beginning to feel ashamed of their racism. The tribal bonds are weakening. Afrikaner hegemony and solidarity are crumbling."

The church. South Africa is officially a Christian state, and most Afrikaners take their Calvinist religion seriously in the up-country towns where Afrikaners still

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London's Shops

Renowned emporiums of the special and the unusual. Where you can buy anything from an elephant to a pin.

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COASTAL REGION

TIME, MAY 4, 1987

follows the old rules, Sunday is strictly a day for prayer and rest, and for paternal readings from the leather-bound family Bible no sports, no fishing, no television.

The Dutch Reformed Church came with the original settlers in 1652, and although it allowed the first black slaves to worship together with their masters, it decreed in 1857 that blacks and whites must attend separate services. Because of its insistence that apartheid is the will of God, the D.R.C. has sometimes been referred to as the "National Party at prayer."

The earliest faint stirrings of dissent occurred in 1974, when that year's synod departed from the traditional affirmation that apartheid derived directly from Scripture, and said only that apartheid was not in any way contrary to Scripture. That dissent grew stronger in 1980, when eight theologians published a statement

protesting the "apparent inability of the institutionalized church in South Africa to fulfill its God-given calling of reconciliation between different race groups."

In 1982 the eight grew to 121 ministers calling on the D.R.C. to play a "much greater role of reconciliation," and though that year's synod elected an eminent conservative as moderator, it decided that the church's racial policy should be "completely revised in the light of Scripture."

When that revision came up for a decision last October, the synod completely reversed the church's traditional stand.

"The Dutch Reformed Church has been convinced that the application of apartheid as a political and social system which injures people and unjustly benefits one group above another cannot be accepted

on Christian ethical grounds since it conflicts with the principle of neighborly love and righteousness." The church declared its doors open to all races, and it elected the liberal Heys as its moderator. Thus does not mean that the church has become or is about to become fully unsegregated (or even partially integrated). In the gold-mining town of Germiston, the Rev. Pieter Dumas admits that some of his white parishioners have dropped out since a colored man was elected an elder for the first time. In Pretoria some 3,000 people are talking of starting a new church for whites only.

But Heys believes that the church's new course is the only one possible. "We have been for 300 years in this country in a certain position of strength and of being able to dictate terms," says he. "Now I would say that very, very suddenly in a new

The Wrong Tribe

The British captured South Africa by force of arms, established its parliamentary tradition and civil service, dug out its gold and diamonds and built its roads and factories. Yet for years these onetime conquerors have been little more than a permanent opposition. With a population of 1.5 million compared with 3 million Afrikaners, English-speaking South Africans are a prosperous minority, controlling perhaps 60% of the economy. Why are they so politically powerless?

"The English didn't realize that government was the biggest business in the country," says Helen Suzman, with a touch of exaggeration and a touch of bitterness. Now entering her 44th year as an opposition M.P. (for some of that time the only one), she is among the leaders of the English-speaking minority. Other well-known members tend to pursue different lines of work: Goller Gary Player, Novelist Nadine Gordimer, Dancer Jule Prowse, Tennis Player Kevin Curran. "And then the English were just outnumbered by the Afrikaners," Suzman adds, "especially in the civil service."

Harry Oppenheimer, son of the founder of the Anglo American Corp., the gigantic mining, manufacturing and retailing conglomerate that controls about a quarter of the country's wealth, used to take an active part in politics. He sat as a liberal in Parliament and financed the opposition Progressive Federal Party. But his efforts came to nothing. Though the corporations that the English speakers control might be expected to give them considerable political clout,

when asked to explain the gap between English economic power and political influence, Anglo American's current chairman Gavin Kelly says simply, "We're from the wrong tribe."

Novelist Alan Paton (*Cry, the Beloved Country*) has elaborated: "We never trekked, we never developed a new language, we were never defeated in war, we never had to pick ourselves out of the dust." Paton, 64, once served as president of the now defunct Liberal Party and feels the Afrikaners' unbridled success outweighs the English fondness for making money and playing golf.

"The English here don't want to rule everything and everybody," he says. "Both Afrikaners and English have a love of the country, but the Afrikaners'

love is in general more fierce, more emotional, more aggressive. It is his history that has done it to him."

There was a time, after the elections of 1948, when the English speakers tried to resist the Afrikaners' complete political takeover. Some 250,000 mainly English war veterans, bitter about their antagonists' widespread pro-Nazi sympathies, formed a paramilitary organization called the Torch Commando (with Oppenheimer financing) to oppose the Afrikaners. There was even talk of secession in the predominantly English-speaking province of Natal in 1953 and again in 1960-61, when the Natalians declared South Africa a republic and led it out of the Commonwealth. But eventually the English minority fell back on the comfortable tradition of live and let live and returned to making money. That minority still pays 60% of all personal taxes in South Africa and 75% of all corporate taxes.

The English speakers lead generally to be more liberal than Afrikaners on racial questions. In September 1985 Rely and a cohort of other corporate leaders voyaged to the Zambian capital of Lusaka to confer with Oliver Tambo, the exiled president of the African National Congress. Rely later declared, "All of us at that meeting wanted to see a new coherent society based on demonstrable justice and a court-molded but of rights." Murray Hofmeyr, incoming chairman of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, has called on South African business leaders to oppose injustice. And Michael Rotholz, chief executive of Barlow Rand, South Africa's second largest industrial empire, has also appealed to business leaders to support reform.

In the wake of bloodshed on both sides of the racial conflict, however, a number of executives are emphasizing caution. Concerned about the A.N.C.'s endorsement of violence and the substantial number of Communists in its ranks, Oppenheimer and the organization should get "neither moral support nor material support."

Some English speakers are now beginning to move to South Africa. In 1985 the country suffered a net loss in immigration with 6,717 more departing than arriving. About 5,000 were highly trained professionals and managerial people. Some 2,500 of the emigrants went to Britain and 4,000 to Australia. "A lot of many of the best and brightest is something that South Africa can ill afford," says Rely.



Boer War

The Afrikaners stoutly resisted British rule in the Boer War of 1899-1902, but ultimately lost. The bloody legacy of guerrilla attacks and concentration camps left deep wounds.

World

tion's history we aren't the guardians anymore. We are partners. And how to act as a responsible partner, that's the challenge."

The political dissenters: One of the most closely watched races in next week's election pits Denis Worrall, who resigned as Ambassador to London to challenge his former leaders against Chris Hani, the Minister of Constitutional Development, who is charged with devising "reforms" that will somehow make the remaining elements of apartheid more palatable. "Different groups and people cast as communities," argues Hani. "The Group Areas Act (which segregates residential areas) makes it possible for them to live as communities."

Worrall emphatically rejects such reasoning. "All remnants of apartheid must be abolished," he says. "The government is misreading the public's readiness for fundamental change. The country yearns for a shared vision of the future, but the government's reform program has that vision. White South Africans of all parties are tired of the government not facing its task. Only the abolition of apartheid will create the environment for negotiations."

Despite Worrall's optimism, recent polls show him trailing Heys by 10 percentage points. But they also show that many agree with his argument. A survey in six key urban constituencies reported that 44% of the voters questioned believed the government had not kept its promises of reform. 43.4% thought the Nationalists had been in power too long and a surprising 51.2% favored scrapping the Group Areas Act.

Others are joining the fray. The most notable is Wynand Malan (no relation to the founder of apartheid), who announced that he was resigning from the Nationalists to campaign for his own seat as an independent. "The National Party finds itself in a stage where it is losing its identity and yet is unable to replace it with a policy," said Malan. "I did not clash with the National Party, I clashed with my conscience. And in the end, conscience wins."

Another rebel is Esther Lategan, a social worker and businesswoman who resigned from the Nationalists to campaign as an independent. "People live in fear of the future," she says. "You must give them hope, and that is what I am talking about. How long can we stay in control? What about our children? Apartheid must go."

Such open spats are still rare, but the new Afrikaner discontent is having its effect even on politicians loyal to Botha. Foreign Minister Roelfs ("Pik") Botha (no relation to the President) lost an election rally this month that some of the so-

cial restrictions of apartheid are absurd. "I cannot understand," he said, "how you can stand in a lift with a black man with a toolbox in his hand, but when he gets on a suit you want nothing to do with him."

Even the shadowy Broederbond, whose whole purpose is to work for Afrikaner power, is beginning to make strange noises. First it forced out about 1,000 members who had split with the Nationalists to form the ultraright Herstigte (Reconstituted) National Party. Then last year it began circulating among its members a working document that canvassed opinion on the idea of a multiracial government. "The rights



Two voices of opposition: Wynand Malan and Helen Suzman. History promises that eventual victory will go to the blacks.

of all groups should be advanced and fulfilled," it said. Now Broederbond Chairman Jan Pieter de Lange is speaking openly of a "tremendous need for more contact [between races] to build up mutual understanding."

Attacked from both left and right, Botha is campaigning as a "moderate" with a ferocity that only Afrikaners could consider moderate. Choosing the US as his favorite target, Botha at an election rally in Lichtenburg in the Transvaal declared that the congressional sanctions against South Africa meant the Kremlin had left its work done for it in Washington. "Waving his arm, Botha insisted, 'South Africa is the scapegoat of America's bad conscience, (but) the South African government is not prepared to surrender.' Some 2,000 Afrikaners leaped to their feet, applauding wildly. Carrying his campaign to revive Stellenbosch last week, Botha claimed that "reform, change and renewal

all run 'like a golden thread' through the history of the National Party. Those who thought otherwise," he declared, "should be ashamed of themselves." Student leaders in the back howled and jeered at Botha, and one of them asked when he would retire. "If I feel like I do tonight, you're likely to see me deal more of me in the future," he said.

Five parties are competing for 120 parliamentary seats in the May 6 election. To the right of the ruling Nationalists are the Conservative and the even more reactionary Herstigte National Party, to the left the New Republic Party and the Progressives. The extreme right Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement), an all-white neofascist movement led by Eugene Terre Blanche that advocates total racial separation, will not field candidates in the election. "If the Nationalist government comes back into power," predicted an antigovernment campaigner at a multiracial Cape Town rally this month, "we will take this as a signal that we have been told our path of peaceful protest." He warned of violence "on a scale never seen before."

Botha's Nationalists now hold a commanding 176 seats, and all pollsters and experts predict they will retain their majority. But Botha is aged, and the struggle to succeed him is expected to start soon after the election. Professor Sambo Terrenceblanche estimates that the "enlightened" wing of the party amounts to about 30% and the reactionary right wing to another 30%, with the remaining 40% spread out between the winner must face new elections in 1989 and that clash may generate major changes, new alignments, even a new party.

Still very much in question, of course, is whether the impending changes will be enough at least to buy some time for further change. And the demand of the black majority's leaders, both in and out of prison, is not just change but a change to black power. An election without blacks, one Soweto leader said last week, is "obscene." Botha and the Afrikaners retain full control of the instruments of power almost all the officers of the well-equipped police force are Afrikaners, and the army is unquestionably the best on the continent. But facing the angry defiance of the black majority, backed by the economic and moral opposition of the outside world, the embattled Afrikaners seem at last to be losing their oil proclaimed determination to maintain apartheid at all costs. Botha's forces may win a majority of the white votes in next week's election, but history promises the eventual victory to the blacks.

By Peter Robinson
Reported by Peter Robinson and Bruce McClellan/Johannesburg

TIME, MAY 4, 1987

Rocking the Cradle of the Volk

An intellectual rebellion sweeps through the Establishment's think tank

The University of Stellenbosch is the oldest Afrikaner-language university in South Africa and by far the most prestigious seat of the country's student Prime Ministers. Its graduates are of them, Daniel Malan, was a university chancellor and another, Hendrik F. Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid, was a professor in the sociology department. The university's present chancellor is State President P. W. Botha, though he did not attend Stellenbosch.

Since 1948, when the Afrikaner-dominated National Party came to power, Stellenbosch has been the government's think tank. Its academic stars have provided the intellectual framework for apartheid, philosophical defenses for social engineering, and more recently, treatises on political "power sharing." Stellenbosch has been called the cradle of Afrikanerdom.

Situated 25 miles from Cape Town on the banks of the meandering Eerste River and surrounded by a rich valley filled with lush vineyards, the university enjoys one of the most beautiful settings in the world. It was this natural beauty that led Governor Simon van der Stel to set up a holiday camp there in 1679. The university started in 1666 as the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, or high school. Today its low-slung buildings, white with red tile roofs, are thickly shaded by ancient oaks and framed by cypress bougainvilleas. Even the trees are considered national monuments. When one of the giant oaks along Dorp Street dies, tree surgeons quickly operate and fill it with cement to keep it standing. The whole town testifies to a deep concern with preserving buildings, traditions and ideas.

Part of Stellenbosch's appeal comes from its isolation. The 14,000 students usually dress as if they were attending classes at a seaside resort: men in shorts or jeans and running shoes, women in white or pastel-colored blouses and slacks. They stroll hand in hand with book bags over their shoulders, stroll on the steps of lecture halls, hop into their cars for a trip to one of the 47 restaurants catering to Maties, the nickname for U.S. students that had its origin in the tomato-colored blazers students used to wear. The Maties have long been politically apathetic. In 1986 Janine Gagnano, a lecturer in political science, called out student student attitudes. The result, she says, "show an amazingly high degree of attachment to the system and a high regard for it."

The usual unpretension is one of supreme tranquility. Only when the Maties turn out to play or watch international rugby games on Friday does the campus seem to stir. Yet beneath the surface, political turmoil is rocking Stellenbosch. The traditional relationship between the university and the ruling Afrikaner establishment has been shattered. The faculty is in intellectual rebellion against the state, and students have been discussing much more than rugby since



Students who used to be interested only in rugby are now talking politics.

March 6, when 27 professors, denounced Botha's reforms as a sham and resigned from the National Party.

Economics Professor Sambo Terreblanche, one of the leaders of the campus revolt, says a deep split has taken place between the university and the country's ruling elite. "At Stellenbosch," he says, "we have reached the point that if a man is willing to defend the government, he has no standing in academic circles. This will have important effects. No government has a right to these problems can afford to lose its academic contacts."

Though concerns over apartheid among the faculty had been growing, Botha's announcement of the whites-only election on May 6 was the immediate catalyst for change at Stellenbosch. It precipitated the rebellion of the professors, who demanded that real reform take place. This challenge shocked students into action. "Politics has passed rugby as the main interest on campus since the election was announced," confirms Philip Nel, director of the Institute of Soviet Studies.

During a lecture discussion group at a professor's house, Stefan Malherbe, editor of the student newspaper *Die Matie*, jumps to his feet. "There has been a great change in the past six months," he says. "The most apathetic student now realizes that he must take part in politics. For the first time, students are taking a critical look at the government."

"Youth is becoming more politically involved," agrees Emile Wesels, campus chairman of the Conservative Party. "Now they say what they want for the future and how to get there. There is more criticism of the government."

Anton Stellenbosch, a former editor of *Die Matie*, a year ago led an attempt by Stellenbosch students to visit the headquarters of the outlawed African National Congress in Lusaka, but the government refused to issue them passports. He says he finds more dissatisfaction than ever before. "There has been a shift to the left on campus, especially since the independent candidates have emerged."

Gagnano is planning some new paths to gauge the effects of the professors' shifting views on their students. Says he, "If the students in the faculty set out to persuade the students to re-examine their political opinions, they will be able to move many of them."

Philip Myburgh, a law student who drafted a denunciation of all remaining apartheid laws that 800 legal scholars approved last month, thinks that "really big happening. 'What is going on here,' he says, 'is the incubation of Afrikanerdom's future thought.' If he is right, the government's think tank could one day be better known as the place that played a decisive role in the transformation of Afrikanerdom."

By Bruce W. Wilson/Johannesburg

TIME, MAY 4, 1987

Letters

Dutch Dilemma

To the Editors:

As Dutch nationals living abroad, we have watched with shame and horror the signs of chaos in Amsterdam [Aug. 10]. In all fairness, this city is not representative of Holland but has functioned as the port of entry for a stream of undesirable elements. But because of Amsterdam, Holland's image abroad is such that foreign investments and tourism have bypassed the country. Dutch leaders should initiate a no-nonsense approach to the problems in that area.

*Henri Clemens
Hans van Riemsdijk
Cascais, Portugal*



I have been to Amsterdam twice. The first time I was robbed at knifepoint; the second, my car-door lock was destroyed and my cassette player stolen. If the Dutch insist on solving their social problems with experiments, I suggest they try importing Bernhard Goetz.

Fred W. Aker
Nuremberg, West Germany

We in the Netherlands are aware that we have erred in handling a number of social problems. On the other hand, our tolerant attitudes stem from our conviction that every citizen is entitled to develop into a mature and happy person. Yes, this applies to homosexuals and lesbian mothers. Your article distorts reality. While pretending to analyze Dutch society in 1987, you do no more than replace the stereotype of a land of windmills, wooden shoes and tulips with another, equally inane stereotype.

*R.H.J. Egeler Van Kuyk
Rijswijk, the Netherlands*

Treacherous Waters

Once again the Reagan Administration has put the U.S. in a totally indefensible position with its operation in the Persian Gulf (Aug. 10). The only possible outcome of reflagging Kuwaiti tankers is

that American lives will be lost. When this inevitable tragedy occurs, the President will have two alternatives: either another humiliating retreat, as in Beirut in 1983, or involvement in a war we should not be in.

**Jack Pearman
Hammond, Ind.**

The determining factor for the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf is not the tiny portion of our crude oil that comes from the region. It is the financial panic that would result from closing the area to the industrialized nations and the ensuing bidding wars. A firm stand now will prevent \$2- and even \$3-per-gal. prices at the pumps. Yes, the U.S. is vulnerable.

Louis A. Malnassy
Chicago

Fragile Accord

The treaty that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has signed with Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene (Aug. 10) is politically tricky on Gandhi's part. First he openly encouraged revolt by the Tamils, and then he bullied Sri Lanka into submission. The terms of settlement betray the people of Sri Lanka, who have been pressured by a strong neighbor to hand over part of their territory to foreign control. I wonder how an experienced politician like Jayewardene was hoodwinked into signing this pact.

Tejpal Singh Dhillon
Smithfield, N.C.

The India-Sri Lanka accord is one of the century's most important agreements. I do not have words to explain the outrageous attack on Prime Minister Gandhi by a Sri Lankan sailor. The sailor's actions were all the more heinous since the Prime Minister was in Sri Lanka on a peacekeeping mission.

Rajesh Rathi
Bombay

You quote Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa as saying "There is terrorism in Sri Lanka only because India is backing it." However, you fail to mention that Sri Lanka has a terrible record of human rights violations in its dealings with the Tamils—so bad, in fact, that some vital Scandinavian aid to Sri Lanka was withdrawn. Also you do not point out that the Sri Lankan army launched an offensive to crush Tamil separatist activity by eliminating all Tamil males between the ages of 13 and 33. The issue of the Tamils in Sri Lanka is complicated, and all three parties—India, Sri Lanka and the Tamils—are to be blame.

Sridhar Rajagopalan
Houston

This treaty, if successful, can breathe new life into the battered image of Gandhi. Time is running out for Rajiv, and the pact with Sri Lanka may prove to be his

best chance for regaining lost ground. On the other side, Jayewardene is gambling his political career on the agreement. For the Tamils, it may be the last ray of hope for gaining their demands peacefully. Too much is at stake for everyone to lose, so *vive l'accord*.

Sandeep Meattle
New Delhi

Righting History

I am concerned about two historical misconceptions in your story on South Africa (May 4). The "few brown-skinned nomads" you refer to, whom Jan van Riebeeck encountered at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, were a society of tens of thousands of gatherers, hunters and pastoralists inhabiting large areas of the Cape and Namibia. Later, in the 1830s, the people you call "fierce Bantu tribesmen" were not moving southward in search of new lands when they clashed with European settlers. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the first farming communities in the Transvaal date from the 3rd century A.D. Natal and the eastern Cape, which were the scenes of many settler battles, were inhabited by black African farmers some 1,000 years before the arrival of the first Europeans.

*John Parkington
Department of Archaeology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, South Africa*

Return of 007

I have enjoyed the Bond series for many years and was very pleased with the new film *The Living Daylights* [Aug. 10]. In an age of Rambos, commandos and other characters who disappear like the wind, it is a pleasure to see James Bond endure and grow—especially with the new Bond hero, Timothy Dalton.

Henry J. Schumacher
Ramsey, N.J.

You say that "in the age of AIDS, even Bond must bend to serial monogamy." You neglect to add that in the age of cancer, the modern Bond has not given up smoking. Shame on the makers of *The Living Daylights*.

Alexander Walker
London

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR should be addressed to:

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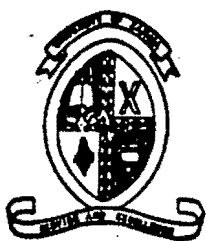
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8th October, 1987

Dr. John Parkington,
Department of Archaeology,
University of Cape Town,
RONDEBOSCH.
South Africa

Dear Dr. John Parkington,

I read your letter to the editors of Time Magazine of August 31st 1987, with tremendous interest. You argue in this brief letter that the Bantu had been in South Africa 'Some 1,000 year before the arrival of the first Europeans' and that there was 'a society of tens of thousands of gatherers, hunters and pastoralists inhabiting large areas of the Cape and Namibia'. That ideas like this exist in South African Universities was a pleasant surprise. It is a pity that circumstances in this region make it difficult for scholars to exchange ideas either by correspondence or conferences. But I would like to assure you that there are people out here who would like to extend to you hands of ~~political~~ comradship to explore this wonderful planet on which we have a common destiny.

I am a theory of literature scholar and right now I have a project (an offshoot of a larger one) and I am trying to trace pre-colonial 'oral' civilization by studying (a) recorded pre-colonial oral literature (here in Zambia there is boundless sea of it) and attempt to decipher 'linguistic fossilization' in it of this past civilization; and (b) contemporary vernaculars of Zambia and similarly worked out linguistic fossilization concerning the pre-colonial world. By the concept of 'linguistic fossilization' I mean words which are comprehensible but do not describe any currently existing

/2.....

reality and seem therefore to refer to a past world. I hold an assumption that the paradigm of 'linguistic fossilization' might lead us to find in folk tales, fables, stories, poetry and drama which were in circulation prior to the advent of Europeans and were frantically written down in the 1940s, what the Greeks found in Homeric literature and the Teutonic or Germanic peoples found in Icelandic sagas as fairly acceptable mirrors of pre-Homeric Greece and of pre-Christian Teutonic Europe, respectively; for which no written records existed until the works of Homer and the Sagaman-and which archaeology later authenticated, considerably.

Archaeological interest in Homeric and Saga literatures has afforded a lot of needed work to brighten the once twilight zone thus depicting the dignity of mankind in those regions of the world. Perhaps, concerted team-work for this part of the world might add further glamour to human-kind. Who knows that consequences this might have for our times and for future generations in scholarship.

Your remarks, Dr. Parkington therefore interest me immensely. I would wish to know more of your work and of that of colleagues. Please be in touch. Perhaps something could come out of our contacts.

Sending you every good wish.

Very sincerely yours,

BWERDO MULENGELA ~~XXXX~~

K. Edwin Knipmeyer
Box 3024 U.City
St. Louis, Missouri (USA)
September 21, 1987

John Parkington
Department of Archeology
University Of Cape Town
Rondebosch, South Africa

Re: Possible redistribution of populations
in South Africa 'scientifically'...
More information requested!

Dear John Parkington:

I still have a few friends, I think, in South Africa, and am writing in inquiry concerning your letter as printed in Time Magazine, August 31, 1987, which on the face of it does not seem quite self explanatory or in harmony with what I thought I knew about South Africa or its peoples. Your letter as printed does not state whether you are professor or teacher or student... But either way I would appreciate more information concerning your situation there.

As I stated above I have a few friends..."I think", left in South Africa. But as I used to know them, and we were never intimate or blood relatives, if I agreed with what seems to be the tenor of your letter, then I would be sure that I no longer have them even as once a year Christmas card acquaintances which most of them now are and really always were. But the cards are getting fewer, because, I suppose, they no longer feel it worth while... They feel that the U.S. has turned its back on them or that they have no friends anywhere in the world who really understand them... And I admit that I find it difficult to understand them... Yet somehow I feel at least partly responsible for not understanding them... At other times I feel that I really do understand them more than they know. Though they are not intimate or blood friends, yet they are so much like me that to meet them even once is feel that one knows them so well as to never forget them... Silly possibly, but so I have so far felt concerning almost everyone I have met who was from or knew S. Africa.

Your letter however disturbs me! It gives another picture! Yet I do not know whether you or the article you criticize is the more true to history or anthropology, particularly physical anthropology? Further I do not know where to go for information, since neither the article or your letter give much data as such to draw conclusions from?

Still more conflicting is the recent opinion I picked up but did not record the sources, is the idea that "South Africa as we know her today has few inhabitants who can really be considered 'Natives' in the scientific sense of the word..." The gist of this new opinion, which I am not even sure was given sincerely, was that considering the way South Africa was today it was incapable of deciding its own future logically or politically. Therefore some third force (in this case I believe the United Nations was suggested?) should take over the area and redistribute the population supposedly 'scientifically' according to racial index of the peoples involved and the actual geography and climate concerned... The suggestion was considered novel but too impractical to take seriously, particularly considering the merits of the organization that was suggested to do the operation.... Considerable 'bull session' type communication continued which at least had the effect of more people thinking seriously about the future of South Africa than ordinarily do so, I believe....

As I wrote above, no one took this discussion too seriously so far as I know. But I do recall the one claim, that "South Africa has few if any Natives today" and no one refuted that claim. The 'claim' also seems to be in harmony with the Time article and my previous information... But you claim otherwise? You say that S.A. was inhabited by African farmers some 1000 years before the arrival of the first Europeans"... But the term "native", as used by physical anthropologists, requires possibly a 100,000 years of living in one place to qualify for, I believe? The Bantu tribes are obviously not 'native' but possibly the Hottentots you refer to do qualify? Could you send me or refer me to more information concerning just who was where when, or who South Africa really belongs to" scientifically? Thanks.

Sincerely, *K. E. Knipmeyer*

The State President
The Office of the State President
Taynhuys
Cape Town
8001

13th February, 1986

hunter-gatherers and herders in the west, and hunter-gatherers and farmers in the east. This then, was the situation encountered by the early colonists.

We trust this information will be of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

ROYDEN YATES

PROF. JOHN PARKINGTON

Dear Mr Botha,

An interview between yourself and Mr Stephen Glover of the London Daily Telegraph was reported in the Sunday Times of the 3rd November, 1985. You are quoted as saying:

"...Afrikaners were...here in this country long before any black groups came here."

This statement has recently come to our attention and we protest, as it is untrue. Archaeological research has revealed the presence of African agriculturalists in the Transvaal, Natal and eastern Cape before 700 AD. The dating techniques employed by the CSIR Radiocarbon Laboratory in Pretoria, which processes many of the dates, are accepted internationally. The debate is whether the first appearance of farming in fact happened during the first, second, third or fourth centuries AD.

It is unequivocally known, therefore, that European settlers did not enter an empty subcontinent. Before the appearance of indigenous farmers, Khoisan ("Bushmen") hunter-gatherers existed in southern Africa for at least 20 000 years, and other hunter-gatherer remains have been dated to + 120 000 years before present.

During the last two thousand years the subcontinent was shared between

ASSOC. PROF. ANDREW SMITH

MS LITA WEXLEY

MR ANTHONY MANHIRE

2/.....



Tuynhuys
Cape Town

1986-02-26

Professor John Parkington
Department of Archeology
University of Cape Town
Private Bag
RONDEBOSCH
7700

Dear Professor Parkington and colleagues

Thank you for your letter of 13 February 1986 with regard to my interview with Mr Stephen Glover.

You may be aware of the fact that a transcript of a discussion, which was held in my office in November 1985, had to be released recently after a newspaper report attributed certain statements to me, which I had never made. In that particular instance my purported remarks were also presented in quotation marks.

In your letter you quoted me from the quotation in the Sunday Times, which apparently quoted me from the London Daily Telegraph, which was based on an interview with Mr Stephen Glover.

I do not for one moment dispute your archeological facts on the prehistoric peoples of Southern Africa, but they were not the subject of my discussion with Mr Glover. I had in fact referred to the eastward movement of the Afrikaners, and their first contact with the Xhosa peoples in what is now the Eastern Cape Province.

- 2 -

The well-known historian, Professor Arthur Keppel-Jones, made the following remarks on that part of our history which was under discussion in that interview:

"The obstacle that stopped the eastward expansion of the Boers during the 1770's was a people with whom close contact was then made for the first time, the Bantu. ... Over a large part of the country they are immigrants of no longer standing than the Europeans. ..."

"When the boundary of the Cape Colony was officially advanced in 1775 to the Fish River in its upper reaches and the Bushman's River nearer the coast, the Bantu had reached roughly the same line from the other side."

(South Africa - A Short History, Hutchinson, 1975, p 49)

These statements by Professor Keppel-Jones on the Bantu, or the Xhosa, do not in any way detract from his previous statements about, for example, the Bushmen:

"The Bushmen themselves were not the oldest inhabitants of the country, but the successors of others known to us only by their bones and implements that have been discovered." (p 14)

I trust that the remarks attributed to me as quoted in your letter, are now in their proper perspective.

Thank you for your interest and the information you sent through to me.

Yours sincerely

P W BOTHA
STATE PRESIDENT

5/11/85
3-11-85

A MAN CALLED BOTHA

ON a recent short visit to South Africa I learnt two things. One is that the country is not in a state of revolution.

The other is that the South African Government, at least as it is represented by President Botha, is both unable and unwilling to deliver the reforms which the world demands.

The point about revolution need not be laboured. A successful revolution must undermine the ruling class. My experience in South Africa was that most whites are not even in the early stages of panic.

There are, of course, exceptions among the English-speaking business community which is congenitally predisposed towards guilt and despair. But in general whites seem to me not to be deeply troubled by the present unrest.

The reason must be that so few of them have personal experience of the riots, which take place regularly in a limited number of black townships, only occasionally spilling into "white South Africa".

The victims of the riots are nearly all blacks, not whites. Because of strict censorship on South African television many whites are not fully aware of what is going on in the townships.

During my few days in South Africa I travelled widely in the northern Transvaal, visiting a number of black townships and passing through a couple of black homelands. Once I saw a single army van.

This was a peaceful South Africa

STEPHEN GLOVER, of the London Daily Telegraph, recently interviewed President Botha. This is his personal view of the man who leads South Africa — and puzzles the world ...

foreign to our television screens. Here, in the countryside at least, one may still be called "Master" by a black without any obvious irony. And here apartheid still reigns supreme.

It is in this context that one should consider an interview which I recently had with President Botha. I had been primed, not least by a number of South Africans in London, to expect a rather anguished man who was desperately polling reforms out of his hat as quickly as possible.

Protracted

Instead I found someone who seemed as confident as he was obdurate. One should not hang everything on an interview but to judge by this one, reform will be protracted.

I presented myself as a journalist who wrote frequently about South Africa. Yet Mr Botha proceeded to address me as someone who had never been to the country before, though it was in fact my sixth visit.

I suppose that if Sir Shridath Ramphal, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, gets his way and bans air flights to South Africa, it may be my last, though one might always take a leisurely cruise, or even a trip by camel.

Mr Botha's misapprehension

about my lack of intimacy with South African affairs was a happy one for it led him (until enlightened by me) to assume the mode of address of a Boer farmer towards a newly arrived Thomas Cook representative.

For example, he referred to English speakers, who happen to make up 40 percent of the white population, as "a small minority". Afrikaners were, by contrast, "here in this country long before any black groups came here".

As the interview progressed it dawned on me that Mr Botha inhabited a different social and cultural universe to mine. Not higher or lower, but different. One of its chief characteristics is isolation.

When I name-dropped De Tocqueville, a genuine spasm of incomprehension journeyed across Mr Botha's face.

Later, during a discussion on religion, he assured me that he regarded Britain, as opposed to some other countries he could mention, as a deeply Christian country.

This is the man who leads South Africa at the moment of her crisis. He may well be the right man, but he is not a paid-up member of the post-enlightenment, liberal Western world.

He is an Afrikaner, an African, a

man of the soil. Whatever his advisers tell him, I do not suppose that Mr Botha cares overmuch about the fall of the rand. What the folk are thinking on the platteland is far more important to him.

Hard though I pressed him during the interview, Mr Botha would not commit himself to any specific reforms, other than to set a date for legislation whose effect will be to bring blacks on to the President's Council, an advisory body.

There was a good deal of talk on his part about meetings with unnamed blacks, a defence of segregated living areas and of the "positive aspects" of apartheid, and a hearty condemnation of one-party Commonwealth states whose "folly" it was to propose sanctions.

Powerful

Mr Botha may not be immortal but he seems immovable, even if some of the more liberal members of his own party are said to be growing a little impatient with the slowness of his reactions.

His powers are considerable.

This is the man of whom the world makes almost daily demands.

There is, in fact, not the slightest chance that in the foreseeable future he will release Nelson Mandela, dismantle apartheid or talk to the African National Congress.

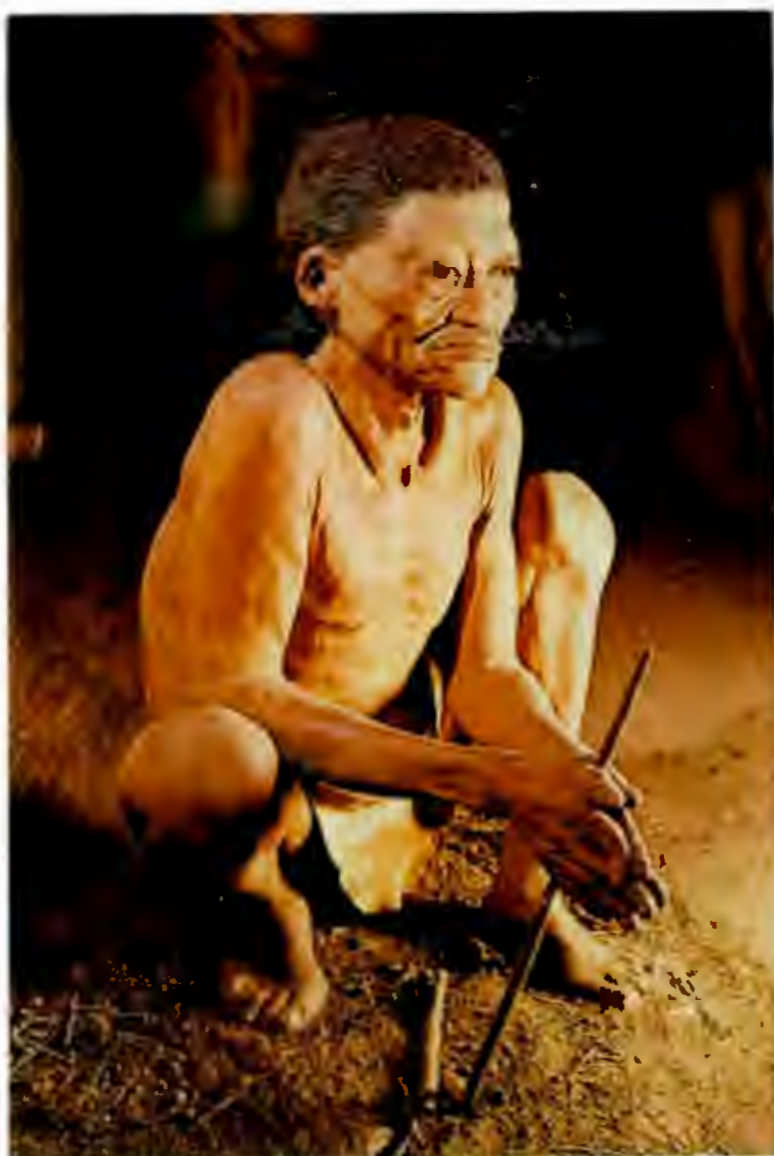
Mr Botha knows there is no revolution in South Africa — and his loyalty is not to the human race in general, but to Afrikanerdom.

APPENDIX D

Illustrations



BUSHMEN: A party of Bushmen from South West Africa stayed in the Festival Fair for the duration and proved an immense attraction. Their home was the South West Africa Pavilion.



Life cast of old Bushman making fire, South African Museum



Life cast of sleeping Bushman woman, South African Museum.



Naron Bushman woman, South West Africa, clapping dance rhythm, South African Museum.



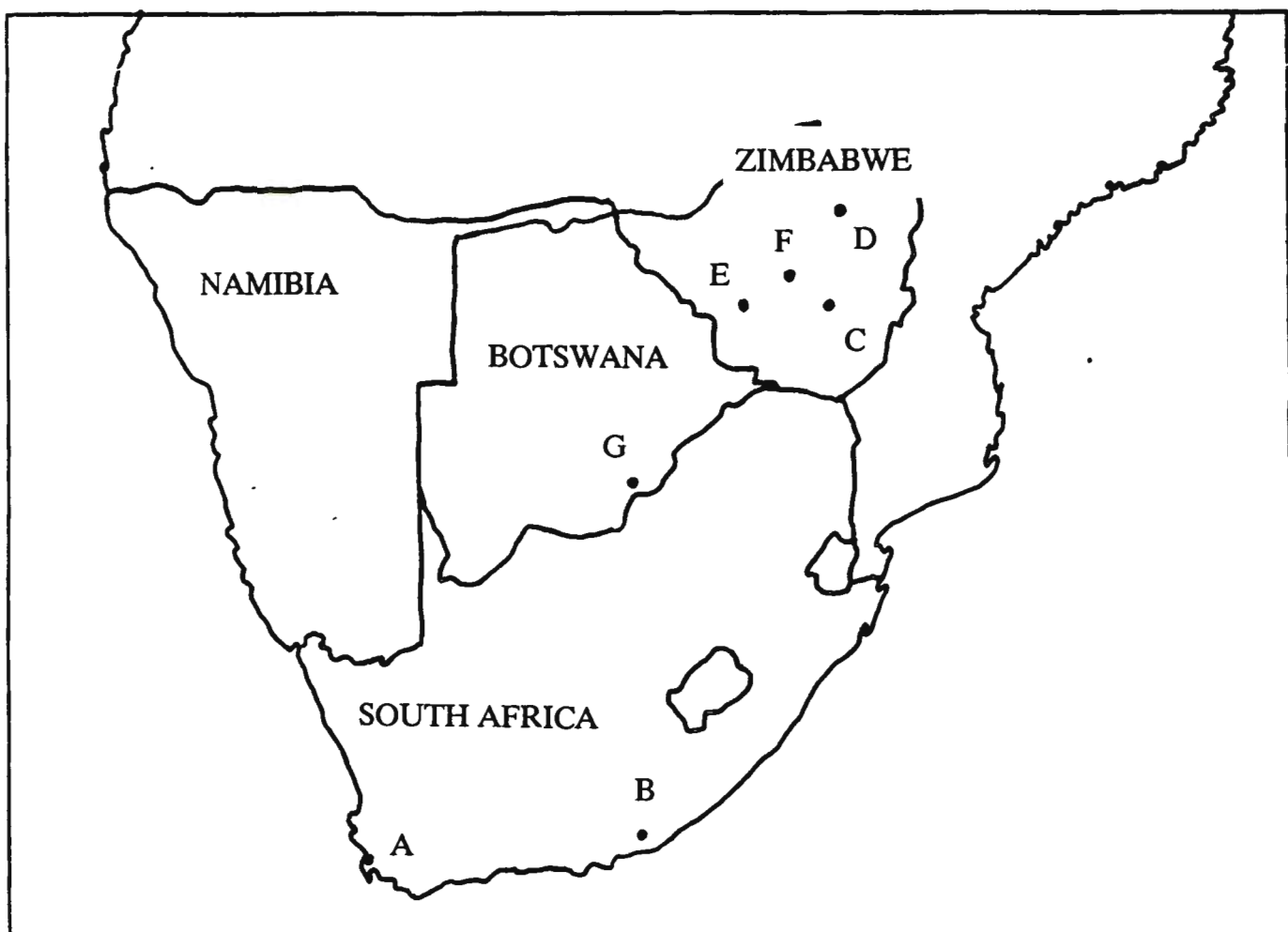
Cape Town, life cast of Bushman woman grinding roots, South African Museum.



Life cast of Bushman hunter, South African Museum.



Bushman woman with bundles of grass, grinding roots, South African Museum.



- A SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM, CAPE TOWN
- B ALBANY MUSEUM, GRAHAMSTOWN
- C GREAT ZIMBABWE MUSEUM, MASVINGO
- D MUSEUM OF HUMAN SCIENCES, HARARE
- E MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, BULAWAYO
- F MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY, GWERU
- G NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, GABORONE

Map of Southern Africa showing location of museums mentioned in the text.

APPENDIX E

COMMENTS ON THE PERPETUATION OF POPULAR NOTIONS ABOUT THE BUSHMEN¹

"Agter die Vensters"²

MUSENEWS is the popular monthly newsletter published by the South African Museum in Cape Town. The publication is a laudable effort by this museum to popularise not only current events at the museum through the inclusion of a monthly calendar, but also to popularise current work being done at the museum. Every issue carries a front page story on some or other topic related to museum activities.

It is the front-cover story of the March 1989 issue, called *CONFESSIONS OF A MUSEUM ADDICT*, to which I react with much concern. My current research is focussed on the presentation of San communities, past and present, in the public media. My concern is with how perceptions of the San are popularised and perpetuated, and it is not great revelation to state that the presentation of the San through this century has been a negative one, ranging from "uncivilised savages" to rather quaint "children of nature" who need to be protected from civilisation. They are presented as such in museums, with little idea being communicated of dynamism or change. *Stasis* is the key concept.

How is the MUSENEWS article contributing to perpetuating the notion of San as "children" to be examined, looked at, analysed, spied on?

CONFESSIONS immediately situates the San in the position of "objects for display" - *curiosities*. The illustration, dominating the front page through its use of at least half of the available space, is a photograph of a group of San in what appears to be a storytelling situation. It is not a photograph of one of the museum displays. The opening sentence reads:

"Any object in a bottle or glass case, anything stuffed or cast, anything mounted or exhibited has held magical attraction for me as long as I can remember."

The immediate connection I make is with the illustration - that the people represented in the photograph must be these *objects* in a glass case - stuffed/cast/mounted/exhibited - which the author of *CONFESSIONS* experiences (as

¹ This is a slightly edited version of an article I wrote for the May 1989 issue of the MARTEVAAN, the newsletter of the Cape Historical Archaeology Association.

² This is the Afrikaans translation for "behind the windows".

I'm sure most museum visitors do) - as "self-contained, defined, ordered, immutable, unusual, wonderful".

CONFESSIONS could be read as a light-hearted, fun story of someone's enjoyment of museums. I would argue that CONFESSIONS reflects deep-seated and very problematic perceptions of the San held by the author, and in this way serves to perpetuate current myths about the San as unusual objects that a glass case can help to contain, define, and order ("correctly and scientifically"). The comment made in CONFESSIONS about the author's collecting impulses not being pure science, but rather a "deeply-held desire to hold and cherish the natural world" also serves to substantiate the idea that the San are objects to be put into glass cases ("desire to hold"), and represented as curiosities of the natural world ("cherish the natural world"). The author spends a few paragraphs waxing lyrical about the evocative nature of "old-style" museums in which he has seen many wonderful things. He then goes on to say how the Khoi and San life-casts exhibited in the SAM always reminded him of a story about a "bergie on a Cape Town bus" who was "inflamed by an imagined racial slur and unknown quantities of meths", who was claiming ancestral links to objectified life-casts.

The story can be read, and was no doubt intended, as an amusing little anecdote, but what are the implied links in the telling of this story, between a seriously drunk "bergie", *imagining* racial slurs, and the people presented not only "agter die vensters" but a popular current image of the San as presented in the photograph used to illustrate the article.

I would argue that it is through just such "innocent" and "amusing" anecdotes that negative images of the San continue in public myth-making. Not only are they presented as objects to be held as cherished behind glass, but their perceived urban relatives are meths-drinking bergies who imagine racial slurs. It is not really very innocent or amusing.

The manner in which responsible institutions, such as the South African Museum, popularise notions about various Southern African cultures is a serious issue, and one that has been taken up by museums. However, it is not only the actual displays and the way they are used educationally that needs to be examined. I am arguing that we need to be constantly vigilant about the stereotypes that are perpetuated in all forms of public media, such as newsletters like MUSENEWS.

MUSE NEWS NUUS INDABA

S A Museum Monthly Newsletter & Calendar of Events

An Education Service Publication



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1825
CAPE TOWN
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Volume 3 Number 3 March 1989

Deel 3 Nummer 3 Maart 1989



Any object in a bottle or glass case, anything stuffed or cast, anything mounted or exhibited, has held a magical attraction for me for as long as I can remember. A psychologist or social scientist will no doubt have an explanation for this primal craving to experience that which is self-contained, defined, ordered, immutable, unusual, wonderful. I confess to being a museum junkie, whatever the reason.

As a child I made my own little collections of things - skeletons of birds and rats, plaster casts of small animals, pieces of mineral and curiously formed stone, old books, and bottles of chemicals. When I think about it now, it was not a pure scientific impulse that drove me to this, but rather a deeply-held desire to hold and cherish the natural world I love so dearly.

Even as an adult I still feel that first childlike excitement mounting in me at

the prospect of entering some dark, musty hall filled with wonderful and unusual things. I know modern thinking favours bright and lively museums, full of light and movement, but to me the smell of old mahogany cabinets, lacquered brass, menthol, formaldehyde, and wax polish on linoleum floors is as evocative as the perfume worn by the first girl I ever kissed.

In my wanderings I have seen many wonderful things, all those artefacts and objects representing the milestones on our way through the world. I have seen fossil bacterial slime countless millions of years old; I have seen Old Fourlegs and the Taung baby; I have seen James Watt's steam engines and the Apollo lunar module; the first motorcycle, James Whitworth's hand-carved lathe lead screw from which our whole technological society grew; Marconi's wireless; I have seen Mozart's piano. (I have

also seen two of Friedrich Schiller's skulls - one when he was little and one when he was a grown man . . .)

Whenever I wander through the South African Museum and see the collection of life casts of Khoi and San people I remember a story told to me about a bergie on a Cape Town bus. This lady, inflamed by an imagined racial slur and unknown quantities of meths, launched into a tirade about 'ancestors'.

'Djille witmense praat mos altyd van djille ancestors. Ma ons het ok ancestors en ek wiet wies my ancestors, hulle staan almal daar in die Museum, netjies opgestop agter die vensters.'

'En djou ancestors? Daars net ou Djan van Riebeeck, hy staan daar op die foreshore ennie duiwe mis op sy kop!'

Herman Fourie

Confessions of a Museum Addict

APPENDIX F

This document is part of a longer-term consultative project of mine around museums and presentations of history and culture. As part of my belief in the need to consult with community-based organisations about developing programmes for history education that involve communities and address their needs, and as part of the need to assess the level of consciousness about museums amongst people involved in educational struggles in South Africa, I have undertaken to speak to a range of people and organisations about the concerns set out in this document.

This document is in no way intended to be unbiased or objective. It clearly reflects a political agenda and is intended to initiate discussions with people on the basis of a this agenda, based on my belief in constructing new histories that will in time be reflected in the cultural memory of a different South Africa.

To date I have discussed this document with a number of people, and include some general comments that are of interest, and that reflect the current status of museums in the consciousness of people organising around education and culture. The comments reflect the opinions and beliefs of individuals, and are not the mandated opinions of organisations. Discussions to date were held between March - April 1990.

Document:

THE ISSUE OF MUSEUMS AS EDUCATIONAL SPACES

Both History and Culture are regarded, in a sense, as sites of struggle in South Africa, and the calls for People's Education and People's Culture are by no means recent. The issues of how knowledge is produced, presented and controlled, and how ideas are perpetuated, have been important in discussions, debate and action around educational and cultural issues.

I am a Masters student in the Archaeology Department at UCT. I am nearing the completion of a research project on presentations of "the past" in museums. This document is towards my research, and is an informal personal attempt to get some idea of what people are thinking around the outlined issues. I hope in the longer term to follow these issues up in a formal, consultative fashion with a range of progressive community, educational and cultural organisations. My specific concern has been with the presentation of gatherer-hunter (Bushmen/San) and herder (Hottentot/Khoi)

history. However, the issue of museums is far broader than the presentation of history and the obvious bias in displays.

Many school students are now being bussed in to the South African Museum in Cape Town. Many students are thus being taught what this museum has, in the form of displays, to teach its visitors. In my opinion, the whole tradition of museums needs to be looked at fairly seriously, because museums as educational institutions are a massive resource that we have perhaps not really even begun to tap. Although it could be argued that visitor figures at the South African Museum indicate that this resource is being quite adequately tapped, I would say that visitor figures are really a cause for greater concern, in that large numbers of school students are being exposed to cultural and historical ideas that are conservative to say the least.

The International Council of Museums, in 1979, defined museums as follows:

"A museum is a permanent, non-profit institution in the service of society and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment."

South African museums have had to admit that the "society" they serve has been an extremely restricted group, and that the service provided has been far too limited. Their collections policies have to be altered so that the material evidence of "man" and "his" environment can be broadened to include "people in our environment".

The rhetoric of museum personnel in South Africa reads something like this:

"We have to bring people into the museums. We need to make ourselves more relevant. We want people to understand that what we have in our collections really belongs to them. The public are the real owners of all that the museum houses. The museum is essentially keeping in trust the heritage that belongs to the public".

Comments from the "public" demonstrate how far removed museum personnels' perceptions are from that of the public:

"There is something about the South African museums that does not reflect what I am. The view it reflects is foreign to me. They portray the white experience. If there is anything there, it is because in some way it has been part of white experience. Museums are not African, they are not South African. They are not part of me." (Mr Khumalo - Wits University, African Languages Department).

Because of the structure of museums, and the nature of the presentation of information in museums - realistic/scientific displays - they form a very powerful medium through which to communicate ideas in the most convincing manner.

The point about museums is that they could be a vibrant and exciting resource for informal and non-formal education. At the moment museum education is too oriented toward school syllabus subjects. The point that arises from this comment is that perhaps museums are NOT the most suitable forum in which "progressive education" could take place, and perhaps a struggle to transform the museum into an institution that serves the needs of progressive education, in terms of methodology and content, is not at this stage an appropriate struggle in which to engage.

However, as always, it is necessary that we learn from the examples of other recently liberated Southern African countries. Museums in Zimbabwe, for example, have changed little in form and content, since independence in 1980. Although serious funding problems have placed severe restrictions on what has been possible in terms of transforming museums in Zimbabwe, the inherited western tradition of museums and their function, is one that is difficult to shake off, no matter how well-intentioned museum personnel may be.

Perhaps museums are better left to implement their interpretation of the task of "curating, preserving and presenting the national heritage". Or perhaps the liberating forces in South Africa need to look at what is presently a powerful educational tool, but one in serious need of transformation.

What I am interested in is the following:

- Are museums, as institutions where education takes place, an area of concern amongst those involved in the struggle to democratise education?
- Are museums, as institutions where history education takes place, an area of concern amongst those involved in writing and presenting progressive histories?
- Are museums, as institutions where cultural education takes place (particularly in Cape Town, in terms of the separate existence of the National Art Gallery, the Cultural History Museum and the "ethnographic/anthropological" galleries in the South African Museum), an area of concern amongst those involved in democratising, and changing popular concepts of, "culture"?
- Are museums a low priority, given the pressing and urgent need for attention to formal education in South Africa? Or is there space and energy to examine creatively ways in

which the educational space of museums can be appropriated to serve the needs of progressive education?

- In terms of our "national heritage" - all music, art, pieces of history, reflections of contemporary politics, our natural environment etc. - how do we want this preserved and presented? And perhaps museums as they presently exist are not the most suitable place to do this?

I would really appreciate your comments on the above issues, and any other comments that you think are important.

Comments:

For clarity and for brevity I have summarised my discussion with each person, and include only the main points and suggestions.

Comments from Mike van Graan (Chair, Community Arts Project (CAP), Cape Town):

Museums at this stage are not an issue of concern, although they clearly should be. A general attitude within organisations towards museums is probably similar to attitudes to other state institutions. This attitude has until recently been one of distance and boycott, where people have not wanted to be involved with state institutions or with state money. But a new attitude is developing that is in line with the spirit of "negotiations", that has seen a shift to the strategy of struggling for the "hearts and minds" of the people. The struggle now is the battle for hegemony, and progressive organisations are going to have to develop the resources in order to engage effectively in this battle.

This shift thus also sees a move towards strategies of engaging with institutions rather than boycotting them.

The question that progressives are beginning to ask are around how we intervene in dominant institutions in order to transform them, or at least to make them less obstructive to our goals.

In these terms, museums need to be engaged. But culture and museums are not part of people's everyday concerns. And generally there has been a strategic attitude that has meant that if there are no immediate gains in a particular struggle, then that struggle is not useful. The shift towards a strategy of participating in the battle for hegemony

through engaging with state institutions is going to be a slow one, and as a first step we going to have to have thought through, and planned carefully towards, alternatives

Comments from Duke Ngcukana (Co-ordinator, Musical Action for People's Power (MAPP) - music school):

"Museums are dead places". And in their current form, serve outsiders and tourists, not locals.

The setting of any kind of presentation is very important - like with theatre, music, dance, any sort of display. Even if the setting of museums changed from the present institutions, there is still no guarantee that people would come to participate in activities or to view displays. Museums should be in community halls, where people can offer what they want to. They should come alive, and there are various possibilities for this. For example, people in communities could use the expertise of the museums to set up their own displays. Real objects are not so important in terms of education, and depending on how the role of the museum is conceptualised, photographs are often a better means of communication than objects.

Comments from Vincent Kolbe (Librarian, Observatory Municipal Library, Cape Town):

Museums generally seem to be symbols of Imperialist power, of imperialist mastery over the earth. They contain the trophies of the ruling class - stuffed lions, stuffed Hottentots. Where civil rights struggles have been fought (such as the USA), themes such as "humanity's triumph over slavery and oppression" have been added to the content of museums.

But in decolonised countries, where there is a search for a new ethos, the role of museums has to be redefined.

The use of museums as resource centres for academic purposes is still valid. But the museums' resources should be taken to people as much as possible. The diverse function of museums should be separated and targeted at specific groups. And museums can no longer be purely visual and static, as we now have television.

A lot of new research and documentation of neglected history will have to be done in order to make museums relevant to the new generation. The task of preserving and presenting the national heritage will still be the responsibility of museums, but there will

be a need for more museums and more varied museums, for less elaborate and more easily accessible museums.

One of the main problems in South Africa at the moment is that community culture used to be nurtured in the face of official disinterest, but this is no longer the case. What has happened to museums is probably similar to what has happened to the libraries. Libraries used to be "the poor man's university", but this is no longer the case. They used to be places of activity, where all sorts of discussion and debate took place amongst members of the community. The suppression of ideas in South Africa has had a very negative effect on this use of facilities.

What is needed is the development of a museum consciousness. And the idea of "community museums" could be developed in conjunction with community resource centres.

Comments from Ciraj Rassool (lecturer, History Department, University of Western Cape):

Public History is currently the terrain of the ruling class and the state. Alternative histories appear to have been developed from *outside* state structures and at times, and in parts, have been taken into the formal, traditional environment of the classroom through struggle and with great difficulty.

Museums have begun to take note of developments, and have begun to rethink their educational activities.

Museums are part of the broader issue of Public History - on television, in coffee table books etc, and the role of Public History in a post-apartheid South Africa is something that will need attention. Alternative museums would have two important roles: firstly, as sources of the past; and, secondly, as places where the past is presented not as a given, but as contested terrain.

What is the capacity of museums to be used educationally and for specific audiences (not just the Joe Soap/Joan Soap-type public)? An important issue in this is how displays would be organised differently for different audiences.

What is needed in developing different museums is the inclusion of this issue in broader discussions about presenting the past in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Comments: (mine)

It is probably not the museum concept, per se, that is at issue, but rather the present objectives of the museum. The concept of a "community museum" needs serious examination through an assessment of the needs of communities, and through an examination of what types of community museums have been set up in countries such as Cuba and Nicaragua. It would be necessary to look at the objectives and the success of such examples elsewhere. Alternatively, perhaps it is the concept of the museum that needs to be looked at - perhaps the concept of "museum" does not have much future, and people are looking at different ways of presenting their past - through poster and t-shirt displays that may not be best displayed in museums. Another option is to look at how the concept of the Mobile Museum Service can be transformed, that in itself could be a type of "community museum". Again, though, the current collections of museums would probably not go particularly far in satisfying community demands for information/ objects/ displays on South African history.